

Annual Report of the
Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan

2007 - 2008



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SASKATCHEWAN, CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER OF SASKATCHEWAN.

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SASKATCHEWAN

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OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

January 30, 2009

The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
129 Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B3

Honourable Speaker:

Pursuant to section 286.1 of *The Election Act, 1996*, I have the distinct privilege of presenting the Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

This Annual report highlights office activities for the period April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'David Wilkie'.

David Wilkie
Acting Chief Electoral Officer
Encl.

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I. MESSAGE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

It is a distinct honour and pleasure that I publish this Annual Report for the period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.

The Chief Electoral Officer, as an independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly, must possess neutrality, integrity, and be worthy of the trust of all the components of the voting public and political entities. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer strives to achieve excellence in its administration and reaches this goal through the optimal use of the resources made available to it. The Chief Electoral Officer's role is to strengthen the Office's mission, uphold its values and enhance its vision, while remaining accountable for its performance. The Office must possess short, medium and long-term priorities. Furthermore, both the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public need adequate information about the Office's goals and they must be able to measure the Office's achievements.

To that end, the Office spent the first half of the fiscal year completing anything left over from the "short-term priorities" and the "medium-term priorities" identified in the "Strategic Plan 2005-2011", issued in June 2005, in order to be fully election ready. The rest of the fiscal year included the election itself and the beginning of the post-election wrap-up and the start of the "long-term priorities" heading towards the next general election to be held on November 7, 2011.

This report is the Office's third "Report Card" on how well the Office has progressed and where more attention needs to be paid.

The ultimate success of the Office may be achieved through a renewed partnership with legislators, political entities, and the electorate while at the same time maintaining or even strengthening the independence of the Office.

With the completion of the November 7, 2007 general election, elections in Saskatchewan have now moved from the "technical election" of the past to the successful implementation of a culture of change and modernization along with a new "service-oriented attitude". There were many new initiatives and changes as outlined below.

As I look back over the administration of the Twenty-Sixth General Election, I see many accomplishments, such as Returning Officer appointments made by the Chief Electoral Officer based on merit, improved training for Returning Officers, improved manuals, forms and materials for Returning Officers and poll officials, the new Elections Saskatchewan Permanent List of Eligible Electors (ESPREE) application and the introduction of Field Liaison Officers. Many new communications initiatives were introduced including improvements to newspaper advertising and the addition of radio advertising, a series of brochures for Aboriginal Voters, Absentee Voters, Voters in the Canadian Forces, Voters in Correctional Facilities and Young Voters, the introduction of a call centre for general inquiries, the introduction of Voter Information Cards, Community Relations Officers for First Nations/Métis and Youth, and improvements to our Web site.

An extensive debriefing program has taken place with our important stakeholders including Returning Officers and Election Clerks, some automation coordinators, representatives of the registered political parties, field liaison officers, the staff of the Office, major suppliers such as Canada Post, our Call Centre supplier, our telecommunications supplier and our advertising agency as well as representatives of groups and individuals, representing voters with disabilities. As we review the lessons learned during our "Debriefing Program" we think of possible improvements in legislation, policies, manuals and forms for the Twenty-Seventh General Election.

Voting must be made more accessible to all Saskatchewan electors. Through its reporting function, the Chief Electoral Officer must recommend to the Members of the Legislative Assembly various ways of making the voting process in Saskatchewan more user-friendly and more accessible. A new report – *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: Volume III – Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act, 1996 - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election* will be produced later this fiscal year. This report will add new recommendations as well as including recommendations from the previous three Annual Reports. Collectively we can create a made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all our stakeholders.

The achievements of the 2007-2008 year, including the administration of the Twenty-Sixth General Election were made possible by the continued support and dedicated effort of Returning Officers and their election officials, registered political parties and their volunteers, candidates, suppliers, contractors, and the staff of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. I extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to these individuals for their professionalism, spirit and commitment to advancing the health of electoral democracy in Saskatchewan.

David Wilkie
Acting Chief Electoral Officer
December 2008

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008 the Office, in addition to annual operational activities, undertook preparations to develop and implement strategic initiatives, which were outlined in the Strategic Plan 2005-2011, and expanded upon in the last three annual reports.

This Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer outlines and discusses strategic initiatives and Office activities over a 12-month period including the administration of the Twenty-Sixth General Election and the preparations for the Cumberland By-Election.

The sections on the Mandate of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and Planning Overview are detailed first. Details on the progress of all short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategic initiatives are updated.

A section on annual Elections Saskatchewan activities outlines annual activities with respect to constituency returning officers, registered political parties including registration, potential candidates and annual financing reporting, the political contributions tax credit system, annual/campaign period reporting, *Detail of Expenditures*, statutory compliance assistance and public disclosure.

The sections on the Twenty-Sixth General Election outline various milestones about the November 7, 2007 election.

The section on Operational Expenditures outlines expenditures of the central elections administration as well as the decentralized expenditures of the constituency returning officer. The 2007-2008 Financial Statement of Elections Saskatchewan, and notes, are also included as an Appendix.

Liaison outlines Office deliberations with federal, provincial, and territorial election officials, as well as cooperation in both the local and international spheres including the Council on Government Ethics Laws, the Conference of Canadian Election Officials, the National Register of Electors Advisory Committee, the Electoral Technology Accord, Educational Liaison and Ongoing Liaison.

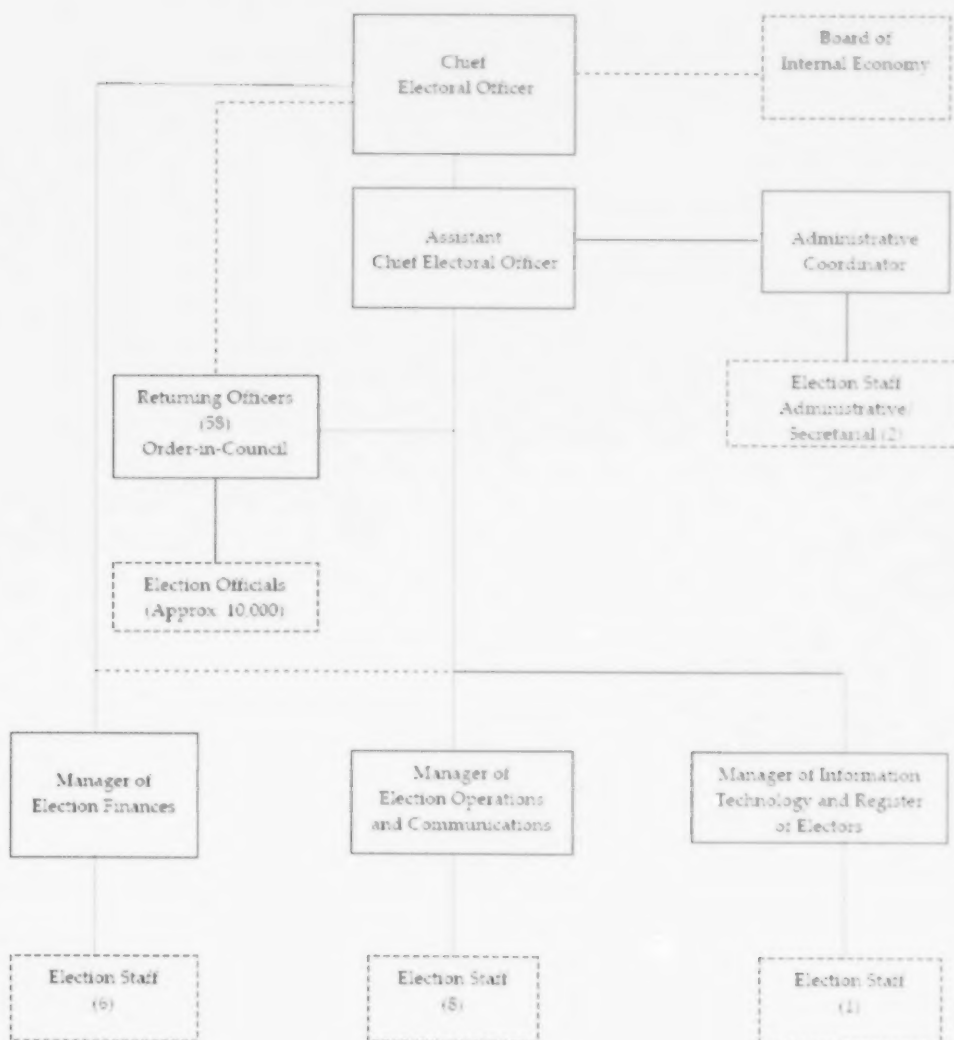
The Miscellaneous section includes an update on human rights complaints and staffing.

The Report concludes with a note on the upcoming Volume III of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Twenty-Sixth General Election which will include recommendations for future amendments based on the experience of the Twenty-Sixth General Election and previous By-Elections.

III. MANDATE OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Office is a non-partisan body charged with the mandate of directing and supervising the administrative and financial conduct of provincial electoral events. The Chief Electoral Officer, appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly, directs the Office and its activities. Under *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office is responsible for the administration of provincial elections, By-Elections, enumerations (other than during a writ of election) and provincial elections finances. The Office is additionally charged with the administration of the Province's political contributions tax credit disclosure system under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office periodically administers and oversees referenda and plebiscites under *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and time votes under *The Time Act*. The Office's mandate is supported by the contributions of administrative and professional personnel as detailed in the organizational chart below.

Organizational Chart - Elections Saskatchewan as of March 31, 2008



The Election Act, 1996 places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to ensure compliance with financial transparency and disclosure requirements of *The Election Act, 1996*. In fulfillment of this duty, the Office publishes guidance documentation to assist chief official agents and business managers in discharging their administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, in compiling requisite support documentation, and in undertaking annual financial disclosure in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office also conducts electoral educational workshops throughout the Province to ensure effective execution of election activities.

The Office is responsible for assessing and reimbursing, where applicable, election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review to certify public reimbursement of election expenses through the examination and audit of registered political parties' and candidates' expense returns and requisite disclosure documentation. To promote transparency, expense return details are published and tabled in the Legislative Assembly for public review.

The Office is responsible for investigating suspected or alleged contraventions of *The Election Act, 1996*, as the Chief Electoral Officer considers necessary. The Office, in determining if an offence has been committed, considers whether the overall purposes, policy rationales and/or legislative intentions of *The Election Act, 1996* were violated in the circumstances at issue. Where the Chief Electoral Officer determines that the alleged contravention is supported on the investigative evidence, the Office forwards the matter to the Ministry of Justice for prosecutorial review.

The Chief Electoral Officer reports annually to the Board of Internal Economy on budgetary matters and to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on matters related to *The Election Act, 1996*. In addition to such annual reporting, the Chief Electoral Officer prepares and tables reports in the Legislative Assembly on all electoral specific activities. Provincial election results are published in the *Statement of Votes - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume I)* and its complementary volume the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer Campaign Contributions and Expenditures - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume II)*. For the first time, a second complementary volume, the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act, 1996 - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume III)* will be published. Administrative and financial reporting of constituency By-Elections is encapsulated in individual statement of By-Election reports.

The Office maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

IV. PLANNING OVERVIEW

In January 2005 the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, embarked on a strategic planning exercise. The results of this planning process were as follows:

- **Three time frames** were set for activities:
 - Short-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2006
 - Medium-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2007
 - Long-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2011.
- **Elections Saskatchewan's Mission** was agreed upon:
 - To ensure the right of the people of Saskatchewan to participate freely in honest, open and fair electoral events, and to encourage the involvement of political parties, candidates and electors by raising their awareness and understanding of electoral processes that are transparent, efficient and accessible.
- **Elections Saskatchewan's Values** were agreed upon as follows;
 - To be **independent and non partisan**;
 - To have **integrity**;
 - To be **open and transparent** in all activities;
 - To be **accountable** to electors and the members of the Legislative Assembly;
 - To be **efficient** in designing processes and ensuring financial accountability;
 - To be **effective** in electoral event delivery procedures and operations;
 - To be **innovative, creative and flexible** in delivering the present and preparing for the future;
 - To be **consultative** with all our stakeholders;
 - To be **professional** in all our activities; and
 - To create a **cooperative** working environment and encourage all of the election team to work together and to work with their stakeholders and partners.
- **Elections Saskatchewan's Vision** was also agreed upon:
 - "A made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all of our stakeholders".

Refer to www.elections.sk.ca for further information on Elections Saskatchewan's Mission and Values.

As in the 2006-2007 Annual Report, this year's Annual Report includes a measure of the Office's performance and will show whether or not the Office is meeting its objectives.

V. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

A. SHORT -TERM (BY APRIL 1, 2006) [WITH UPDATES]

(Repeated below from the 2006-2007 Annual Report with any appropriate updates **bolded**).

1. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan should develop a comprehensive Change Management Strategy; this will encourage participation and commitment of the current staff, establish specific objectives, plans and measurable outcomes and gain support with other stakeholders. The following is a partial list of some of the things that should be included:

- (a) Presentation of this Strategic Plan to the Board of Internal Economy, the Legislature, and the all-party committee;
- (b) Publish and promulgate the Mission, Vision and Value documents developed in this Strategic Plan;
- (c) Consult actively with all stakeholders, about this Strategic Plan and other opportunities;
- (d) Consult actively with constituency returning officers and their election clerks; and
- (e) Involve Elections Saskatchewan headquarters staff in these consultations and presentations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

(a) and (b) STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011, WHICH INCLUDED THE MISSION, VISION AND VALUE DOCUMENTS WAS DISTRIBUTED IN CD FORMAT TO THE:

- MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY;
- RETURNING OFFICERS; AND
- REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY OFFICIALS.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011 WAS PUBLISHED ON THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE.

(c) CONSULTED WITH REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

THE ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY, WHICH HAD BEEN ON HIATUS SINCE 2001, WAS REVIVED. THE COMMITTEE MET TWICE, ONCE IN NOVEMBER 2005 TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011 AND THE THEN PENDING AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTION ACT, AND ONCE IN APRIL 2006 TO DISCUSS PREPARATIONS FOR THE PENDING BY-ELECTION IN WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY. IN NOVEMBER 2006 THIS COMMITTEE MET AGAIN TO REVIEW THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION AND BE APPRISED OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARTENSVILLE BY-ELECTION AND THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION.

IN 2007 ALL NEWLY APPOINTED RETURNING OFFICERS WERE SENT A COPY OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011. THE OFFICE BELIEVES THAT AN ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT FORUM TO DISCUSS ELECTORAL ISSUES WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE PROVINCE. TO THIS END A RECOMMENDATION TO FORMALIZE THE ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED IN VOLUME III OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S REPORT ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION ENTITLED, *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer – Volume III – Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act, 1996 – Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election*.

(d) COPIES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011 WERE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL RETURNING OFFICERS AND THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE MET WITH ALL RETURNING OFFICERS ACROSS THE PROVINCE IN OCTOBER 2005 TO DISCUSS THE PLAN.

(e) ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN HEADQUARTERS STAFF WERE INVOLVED IN THESE CONSULTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS.

UPDATE: IN MAY 2008 THERE WAS A MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO DEBRIEF ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION AND BE APPRISED OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CUMBERLAND BY-ELECTION. SEE MEDIUM TERM INITIATIVES #2.

2. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC IMPACT ANALYSIS OF BILL 199, AN ACT TO AMEND *THE ELECTION ACT*, 1996.

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan should conduct a Strategic Impact Analysis on the impact of the proposed revisions to *The Election Act*, 1996 on the organization; existing policies, procedures and guidelines; forms and other documents; and, day-to-day operations in both a non-election and election period. This will result in the development of action plans to ensure that the organization is prepared to implement the required changes, if required, prior to the next electoral event.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER CONDUCTED A STRATEGIC IMPACT ANALYSIS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO *THE ELECTION ACT*, 1996.
- THE ENTIRE OFFICE PARTICIPATED IN A REVIEW OF THE ANALYSIS RESULTING IN AN ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE AMENDMENTS PRIOR TO THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION.
- THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE AMENDMENTS TO *THE ELECTION ACT*, 1996 WERE SHARED WITH RETURNING OFFICERS AND REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES IN MEETINGS IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2005, RESPECTIVELY.

NO UPDATE REQUIRED.

3. DEVELOP A STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH/COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan needs to develop an outreach/communications strategy to raise the awareness of the electorate, in general, in regards to their democratic rights in the electoral process. More specifically, strategies are required to improve the voter turnout amongst the youth (the 18 to 25 year olds) and the First Nation sectors of the electorate. In addition, an advertising strategy for the next general election should be developed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:
 - WORK HAS BEGUN TO REVIEW THE ADVERTISEMENTS USED IN PAST ELECTIONS.
 - IN THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION, RADIO ADVERTISEMENTS AND NEWS RELEASES ISSUED BY THE OFFICE WERE USED FOR THE FIRST TIME.
- YOUTH SECTOR
 - THE OFFICE WAS FORTUNATE IN OBTAINING THE SERVICES OF TWO COMMUNICATIONS INTERNS FOR THREE MONTHS FROM SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2005 AS PART OF THE CANADA WORLD YOUTH PROGRAM. SERHIY VAKULICH WAS FROM UKRAINE. LIAM O'LEARY WAS FROM NOVA SCOTIA VIA TORONTO WHERE HE IS ATTENDING UNIVERSITY.
 - THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE INTERNS WAS TO:
 - a) RESEARCH THE WEB SITES OF OTHER ELECTORAL JURISDICTIONS INCLUDING THOSE IN CANADA, UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA;
 - b) RESEARCH THE ISSUE OF YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT;

- c) DRAFT A PROPOSAL FOR A YOUTH PORTION FOR THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE, AND;
- d) WRITE A REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT YOUTH VOTING.
- e) AS A RESULT OF THEIR EFFORTS A YOUTH SECTION WILL BE ADDED TO THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
- FIRST NATIONS SECTOR
 - THE OFFICE HAS BEGUN TO LOOK AT THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER PROGRAM USED BY ELECTIONS CANADA RETURNING OFFICERS IN THEIR PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES. THE OFFICE WILL BE LOOKING AT ADAPTING THIS PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST NATIONS AND YOUTH SECTORS.
- WEB SITE
 - AT THE ISSUANCE OF THE WRIT IN OCTOBER 2003, ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN LAUNCHED ITS WEB SITE, WHICH WAS VERY WELL RECEIVED ACROSS THE PROVINCE. SINCE THAT TIME SOME IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BASED ON FEEDBACK FROM VOTERS AND THE DESIRE TO MAKE ELECTION FINANCING MORE TRANSPARENT.
 - A TOTAL REVAMP OF THE WEB SITE IS PLANNED PRIOR TO APRIL 1, 2007 IN ORDER TO MAKE THE WEB SITE MORE USER FRIENDLY.
 - MORE WORK HAS TO BE DONE AFTER THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION TO EVALUATE THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY USED FOR THE BY-ELECTION AND TO EXPAND IT FOR USE AT A GENERAL ELECTION BUILDING IN SPECIFIC FIRST NATIONS AND YOUTH COMPONENTS.

UPDATE: SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES #6.

4. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS INTO THE AUTOMATION OF ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY PRODUCTS

Objectives:

Currently all of the electoral maps, street guides and poll keys are generated manually. The cartographers required to manually prepare these products are becoming a scarce resource and may not be available to meet future requirements. Elections Saskatchewan must determine the strategic alternatives and an implementation plan to resolving this issue as soon as possible in order to meet the target date of election readiness for April 1, 2007. Consideration should be given to conducting a pilot project of the solution(s) selected, preferably in high-growth constituencies, as a "proof of concept". The map products currently available will allow Elections Saskatchewan to meet any requirements for electoral events in the meantime.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- AN ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY IMPACT ANALYSIS STUDY WAS COMPLETED IN OCTOBER 2005. IN NOVEMBER 2005, THE MANAGER OF ELECTION OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER TOOK PART IN AN ELECTORAL TECHNOLOGY ACCORD WORKSHOP ON ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY IN OTTAWA;
- AFTER THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION:
 - FURTHER FOLLOW-UP WITH INFORMATION SERVICES CORPORATION WILL TAKE PLACE; AND
 - PREPARATIONS WILL BEGIN FOR APPROXIMATELY 18 RETURNING OFFICERS TO BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER TO REVIEW THEIR POLLING DIVISION MAPS WHERE SOME POLLS HAVE EXPERIENCED LARGE POPULATION GROWTH.
 - FOR STAFFING AND FINANCIAL REASONS IT WAS DECIDED NOT TO DO A COMPLETE REMAPPING OF ALL 58 CONSTITUENCIES. INSTEAD CONSTITUENCIES WITH THE MOST RESIDENTIAL GROWTH SINCE THE LAST ELECTION WERE IDENTIFIED.

UPDATE: SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES #7.

5. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS INTO THE IMPACTS OF IMPLEMENTING A PERMANENT ELECTRONIC VOTERS' LIST

Objectives:

The second reading of Bill 119 contained an announcement that "One of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voters' list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voters' list."

This directive indicates that it would be prudent of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to commission an immediate study into the strategic impacts and options of developing a permanent electronic voters' list for Saskatchewan.

This study would have been recommended irrespective of Bill 119 being introduced because it is a key element that must be reviewed as part of the Chief Electoral Officer's efforts to modernize and renew electoral processes in the province of Saskatchewan. The introduction, or studies in regards to the impacts of implementing, automated registers of electors has been a major activity for most other electoral jurisdictions in Canada over the past ten years. Because of these activities, there is a wealth of information and experiences for Elections Saskatchewan to draw from in the conduct of this important study.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN RECEIVED THREE GENEROUS OFFERS FOR THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF LIST OF ELECTORS SOFTWARE (FROM ELECTIONS ONTARIO, ELECTION BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ELECTIONS ALBERTA);
- A CONSULTANT WAS HIRED TO SURVEY THE THREE SYSTEMS AND TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION REGARDING WHICH SYSTEM BEST FIT SASKATCHEWAN'S NEEDS.
- AFTER AN EXTENSIVE FIELD APPLICATION SURVEY (NOVEMBER 2005); THE CONSULTANT RECOMMENDED ELECTION ALBERTA'S WEB-BASED ALBERTA REGISTER OF ELECTORS SYSTEM (AROE).
- THE OFFICE HAS ENGAGED THE SERVICES OF A SYSTEMS CONSULTING FIRM TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO AROE TO MAKE IT THE SASKATCHEWAN SPECIFIC ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PERMANENT REGISTER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS (ESPREE):
 - THE FIRM THAT THE OFFICE HAS ENGAGED IS THE ORIGINAL FIRM THAT DEVELOPED AROE AND HAS CUSTOMIZED THE SOFTWARE FOR ELECTIONS NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND ELECTIONS NUNAVUT;
 - THE SOFTWARE CHANGES RELATED TO THE LIST OF ELECTORS ARE EXPECTED TO BE OPERATIVE IN THE FALL OF 2006; AND
 - OTHER COMPONENTS ARE ANTICIPATED FOR A COMPLETION DATE IN EARLY 2007;
- THE OFFICE ANTICIPATES THE ENACTMENT OF REGULATIONS THAT WILL ALLOW THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER TO IMMEDIATELY COMMENCE THE PROCESS OF ENSURING THAT SASKATCHEWAN HAS A CURRENT AND ACCURATE VOTERS' LIST THAT WILL FACILITATE VOTING AND COMMUNICATIONS IN AN ELECTION IN A MUCH MORE MODERN AND EFFICIENT MANNER.

UPDATE: SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES #3 AND #9.

6. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC STUDY TO IMPLEMENT A CONTACT CENTRE

Objectives:

This study is required to improve the effectiveness of communicating with stakeholders both in an electoral event and non-electoral event mode of operation. In past elections, all headquarters staff has been involved in the answering of all telephone, e-mail and other correspondence with stakeholders during an election. This was disruptive to the management of the electoral process and ineffective in meeting all of the demands for information. This initiative is operational in nature but is critical to freeing-up Elections Saskatchewan managers and staff to manage the successful conduct of the next general election while meeting the requirements for timely information from all stakeholders.

As well, the information collected on a day-to-day basis during an electoral event in regard to stakeholder queries will enable the management team at Elections Saskatchewan to be aware of stakeholder issues and take proactive steps to ensure those demands are being dealt with.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- A CONTACT CENTRE STRATEGY STUDY WAS COMPLETED BY A CONSULTANT IN SEPTEMBER 2005; AND
- WORK IS NEARING COMPLETION FOR A DRAFT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TO BE ISSUED IN THE FALL OF 2006.
- A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL WAS ISSUED IN THE WINTER OF 2006/2007. A COMPANY WAS CHOSEN IN EARLY SPRING 2007.

UPDATE: SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES #5.

7. CONDUCT AN ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

Objectives:

- The current centralized and decentralized organizational structures and functions should be reviewed. This should be done after the other short-term strategic initiatives outlined above are completed because the outcomes of those studies could have major impacts on the functionality and structure of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- AN ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW TOOK PLACE. IT WAS DECIDED THAT NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO MAKE ANY MAJOR CHANGES TO THE CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION.

NO UPDATE REQUIRED.

8. CONDUCT A REVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Objectives:

The current policies, procedures and guidelines should be reviewed for opportunities for renewal/change or to fill gaps that may be identified. The first step should be to identify which ones should be reviewed immediately and which ones should be reviewed after the strategic initiatives identified above are completed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- A REVIEW TOOK PLACE OF CURRENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES. AS A RESULT A STANDARDIZED FORMAT FOR POLICIES WAS ADOPTED AND POLICIES ON MOBILE POLLS, ABSENTEE VOTING, ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFICATION, VOUCHING AND THE APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER WERE DEVELOPED. THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES WILL BE AN ONGOING PROJECT AS THE OFFICE STREAMLINES ITS TRAINING MATERIALS FOR RETURNING OFFICERS/ELECTION CLERKS AND OTHER POLL OFFICIALS.
- FURTHER POLICIES ON VANDALISM OR THEFT OF SIGNS, ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PASSWORDS, WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EMERGENCY UNDER SUBSECTION 44(8) AND LIST OF ELECTORS GUIDELINES (AND ACCOMPANYING FORMS) WERE DEVELOPED IN THE 2006-2007 FISCAL YEAR. THE POLICY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER WAS FURTHER REFINED IN APRIL OF 2006.

UPDATE: A POLICY ON SECURITY PROCEDURES FOR "FORM B" BALLOTS, LIST OF ELECTORS - GUIDELINES AND A POLICY ON REVIEWS, INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS WERE DEVELOPED IN THE 2007-2008 FISCAL YEAR.

9. IMPLEMENT AN ELECTIONS FINANCE REPORTING SYSTEM

Objectives:

Election expense reporting by political parties and candidates is a statutory requirement with specific time deadlines post election. Currently this is a manual paper-oriented process that is onerous for both those completing the documents and for Elections Saskatchewan to review. Automated tools should be developed that can be distributed to the business managers for candidates and the chief official agents for political parties. This would clarify the rules for reporting and simplify the preparation of these reports and facilitate the activity for everyone involved. This would also reduce the workload and time frames required for Elections Saskatchewan staff to review the reports (currently five to seven months elapsed time) and should lead to more timely reimbursement of elections expenses.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- A CONSULTANT HAS BEGUN TO ASSESS ELECTIONS CANADA'S ELECTIONS FINANCE REPORTING SYSTEM WITH THE HOPE OF DEVELOPING A SIMILAR SOFTWARE PROGRAM. [DUE TO THE CONSULTANT'S ILLNESS AND SUBSEQUENT DEATH THIS INITIAL ASSESSMENT WAS NOT COMPLETED].

UPDATE: SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES #4.

10. REVIEW AND UPDATE THE ELECTION READINESS PLAN

Objectives:

The review and updating of the Election Readiness Plan is a critical initiative that must continue in parallel with the conduct of the other strategic initiatives outlined above. Some of these strategic initiatives may have major impacts on the Election Readiness Plan, but other situations may occur which necessitate changes or additions to the Plan as well. The axiom that "the world doesn't stop while you plan" applies to this activity.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

(a) ADMINISTRATION OF WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION:

Upon receipt of a subsection 40(1) notice under the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005*, the Chief Electoral Officer, under subsection 43(2) as soon as practicable, informs the Lieutenant Governor in Council of any Member vacancy and must, in accordance with subsection 46(1) of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005*, hold a By-Election to fill a vacancy within six months after a seat becomes vacant and notice of that vacancy has been given. Once the Member for Weyburn-Big Muddy tendered her resignation on February 28, 2006 preparations for a By-Election went into high gear.

BY-ELECTIONS ARE A USEFUL TIME TO TEST OUT POSSIBLE INNOVATIONS OR PILOT PROJECTS ON A SMALL SCALE.

SOME NEW INITIATIVES FOR THE BY-ELECTION INCLUDE THE USE OF:

- POSTERS TO RECRUIT ENUMERATORS;
- PRE-WRIT ACTION PLANS BY THE RETURNING OFFICER;
- AN ACCESS-BASED ELECTION DAILY OPERATIONAL PLAN (ADAPTED FROM ANOTHER JURISDICTION);
- SENDING NEW RELEASES TO THE MEDIA;
- RADIO ADVERTISING;
- CANADA POST ELECTRONIC STATEMENT OF MAIL TO FORWARD ABSENTEE BALLOT KITS TO ABSENTEE VOTERS IN CANADA AS WELL AS FOR OUTSIDE OF CANADA;
- VOTER INFORMATION CARDS (VICs) WITH POLL LOCATION AND ADVANCE POLL LOCATION MAILED BY CANADA POST TO ALL VOTERS WHO HAD BEEN ENUMERATED IN ALL REGULAR POLLS. THE VICs WERE MAILED PRIOR TO THE START OF THE ADVANCE POLLS;
- MAGNIFYING GLASSES AT THE POLL FOR VOTERS WITH SOME DEGREE OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT;
- CARDBOARD BALLOT BOXES;
- LONGER STANDARDIZED OFFICE HOURS FOR RETURNING OFFICE;
- INTERNET ACCESS FOR RETURNING OFFICE;
- MOBILE POLLS WHICH VISIT SEVERAL SMALL PERSONAL CARE HOMES IN THE CONSTITUENCY (PREVIOUSLY ONLY LARGE PERSONAL CARE FACILITIES HAD THEIR OWN HALF DAY OR FULL-DAY POLL); AND
- POST-ELECTION DEBRIEFING WITH RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTION CLERK (VIA WRITTEN REPORT AND IN-PERSON).

(b) ADMINISTRATION OF MARTENSVILLE BY-ELECTION

PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 42(1) OF *THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT, 2005*, AND DUE TO THE PASSING OF MR. BEN HEPPNER, THE CONSTITUENCY OF MARTENSVILLE BECAME VACANT ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2006. THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, UNDER SUBSECTION 43(2), AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE, INFORMS THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL OF ANY MEMBER VACANCY AND MUST, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION 46(1) OF *THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT, 2005*, HOLD A BY-ELECTION TO FILL A VACANCY WITHIN SIX MONTHS AFTER A SEAT BECOMES VACANT AND NOTICE OF THAT VACANCY HAS BEEN GIVEN. ONCE THE MEMBER FOR MARTENSVILLE PASSED AWAY ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2006 PREPARATIONS FOR A BY-ELECTION WENT INTO HIGH GEAR.

SOME NEW INITIATIVES FOR THIS BY-ELECTION INCLUDED THE USE OF:

- THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PERMANENT REGISTER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS (ESPREE) SOFTWARE – PHASE I – AN ELECTRONIC LIST OF ELECTORS BASED ON ELECTIONS ALBERTA'S ALBERTA REGISTER OF ELECTORS SYSTEM (AROE). THE WEB-BASED SOFTWARE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR EIGHT DATA ENTRY OPERATORS (DEOS) TO DATA ENTER 10,000+ ELECTORS IN FOUR DAYS (SEVEN OF EIGHT DEOS WORKED FROM HOME);
- NEW "REDESIGNED" NEWSPAPER ADS;
- A MANUAL FOR DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICERS (DROs) AND POLL CLERKS WAS DEVELOPED FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1995. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE DROs AND POLL CLERKS IN THE BY-ELECTION RESULTED IN FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE "FINAL" VERSION TO BE USED AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.

(c) PREPARATION FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION

PREPARATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION BEGAN IN 2004 AS A RESULT OF THE THIN MAJORITY IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. ALL FORMS AND MATERIALS WERE RE-ORDERED, PRINTED AND PACKED IN THE EVENT OF AN ELECTION CALL. AS A RESULT OF THE AMENDMENTS, WHICH RECEIVED ROYAL ASSENT ON MAY 27, 2005 AND WHICH WERE PROCLAIMED MARCH 22, 2006, THERE WERE MANY CHANGES TO EXISTING FORMS. ALL BOXES OF PREVIOUSLY PACKED ELECTION MATERIALS HAD TO BE UNPACKED AND RE-PACKED WITH THE REPLACEMENT OF THE OBSOLETE FORMS. ENUMERATION AND ABSENTEE VOTING MATERIALS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL RETURNING OFFICERS IN MAY, 2007. SEE BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION.

- SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES INCLUDED THE PROCEDURES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER THROUGH A MERIT-BASED PROCESS;
- MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE AS FOLLOWS:
 - TRAINING FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING POLLING DIVISIONS IN APPROXIMATELY 18 CONSTITUENCIES SCHEDULED FOR FALL 2006;
 - THE RESULTING REVISIONS TO MAPS, POLL KEYS AND URBAN STREET INDEXES FOR THE 18 CONSTITUENCIES;
 - CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICER TRAINING. MOST CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS WILL RECEIVE A FULL THREE-DAY TRAINING SESSION PRIOR TO THE WRIT OF ELECTION. THE SESSIONS WILL BE OFFERED IN SPRING 2007 IN BOTH REGINA AND SASKATOON FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THOSE ATTENDING.

- THE THREE-DAY TRAINING SESSION WILL REVIEW CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICER MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES, ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION, PERSONNEL TRAINING, AND OUTREACH WITH REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES, CANDIDATES AND THE ELECTORATE. SPECIFIC CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES REVIEWED INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:
 - SELECTING, APPOINTING AND TRAINING ELECTION OFFICIALS (i.e., ENUMERATORS, DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICERS, POLL CLERKS, ETC.);
 - PLANNING AND CONDUCTING ENUMERATIONS, INCLUDING PRODUCING A CONSTITUENCY VOTERS' LIST;
 - DISTRIBUTING AND RECEIVING CANDIDATE NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION FINANCE DOCUMENTATION;
 - PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING ADVANCE POLLING AND ELECTION DAY VOTING; AND
 - COMMUNICATING WITH POLITICAL STAKEHOLDERS, THE PUBLIC AND THE MEDIA.

RECRUITMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS

- ONE OF THE MAJOR RECENT AMENDMENTS TO *THE ELECTION ACT, 1996* WAS THE CHANGE FROM RETURNING OFFICERS BEING IDENTIFIED AND APPOINTED BY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO BEING RECRUITED AND APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, BASED ON MERIT. POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS WERE DEVELOPED USING BACKGROUND MATERIALS AND EXAMPLES FROM ELECTIONS MANITOBA, ELECTIONS BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ELECTIONS QUEBEC.
- AFTER COMPLETING AN APPLICATION FORM, SHORT-LISTED APPLICANTS WERE DIRECTED TO TAKE A "PREVUE TEST". THIS TEST, TAKEN ON A HOME COMPUTER, IDENTIFIED POSSIBLE AREAS WHERE THE SKILLS OF THE APPLICANT WERE ABOVE OR BELOW THE BENCHMARK SET BY ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN FOR THE POSITION. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PRINT-OUT WAS PRODUCED FOR EACH SHORT-LISTED APPLICANT IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE QUESTIONS WITH RESPECT TO AREAS WHERE THE APPLICANT WAS BELOW THE BENCHMARK (THIS PROCESS WAS MANAGED BY A CONSULTANT WHO HAD DONE SIMILAR WORK FOR ELECTIONS BRITISH COLUMBIA).
- FROM JANUARY UNTIL APRIL 2007, THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY INTERVIEWED THE APPLICANTS IN REGINA, MOOSE JAW OR SASKATOON.
- THE AGE DEMOGRAPHIC FOR RETURNING OFFICERS HAS DECREASED DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF MERIT- BASED APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER.

NEW RETURNING OFFICER'S MANUAL

- THE RETURNING OFFICER'S MANUAL WAS RE-WRITTEN IN SIMPLER LANGUAGE, IN ROUGHLY CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER AND WITH PAGE NUMBERS, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THREE RETURNING OFFICERS. THIS RE-WRITE WAS COMPLETED IN EARLY APRIL JUST IN TIME TO UNVEIL AT THE RETURNING OFFICER/ELECTION CLERK TRAINING. IT WAS WELL RECEIVED BY PREVIOUS AND NEW RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS.

REVISED TRAINING FOR RETURNING OFFICERS/ELECTION CLERKS

- THE ALL-PARTY COMMITTEE (WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATION FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER) MET IN 2004 TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE CHANGES TO *THE ELECTION ACT, 1996*. WHEN IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT RETURNING OFFICERS BE APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER IT WAS ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT "ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN BE ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE MORE AND ONGOING TRAINING TO RETURNING OFFICERS, INCLUDING TRAINING ABOUT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY".
- IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE DURATION AND FORMAT OF TRAINING NEEDED TO CHANGE DRAMATICALLY WITH THE REALIZATION THAT APPROXIMATELY 50 PER CENT OF THE RETURNING OFFICERS AND 60 PER CENT OF THE ELECTION CLERKS HAD NOT ACTED IN THAT POSITION PREVIOUSLY AND DUE TO MANY CHANGES IN THE LEGISLATION, POLICY AND FORMS SINCE THE LAST ELECTION.
- THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER DESIGNED THE TRAINING PROGRAM WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS. THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER PERFORMED THE ROLE OF TRAINER FOR THE FIVE TRAINING SESSIONS (TWO IN SASKATOON/ THREE IN REGINA) WITH ASSISTANCE FROM FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS AND THE MANAGER OF ELECTIONS FINANCES, A LONGER THREE-DAY TRAINING PERIOD, SMALLER CLASS SIZE, GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING, ROLE PLAYING AND SOME POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS BY OUR SOFTWARE DEVELOPER (ESPREE) AND A CANADA POST REPRESENTATIVE ADDED TO THE VARIETY. FEEDBACK FROM RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS WAS VERY POSITIVE.

PRE-WRIT ASSIGNMENTS

- AFTER SUCCESSFUL PILOT PROJECTS FOR THE TWO PREVIOUS BY-ELECTIONS, RETURNING OFFICERS HAD A FORMAL LIST OF PRE-WRIT ACTIVITIES TO COMPLETE IN ORDER TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION. A SERIES OF ACTION PLANS AND CHECKLISTS ITEMIZED POSSIBLE OFFICE SPACE, POSSIBLE OFFICE STAFF, TENTATIVE LIST OF ENUMERATORS, TENTATIVE POLLING PLACES AND ADVANCE POLL LOCATIONS ETC.

UPDATE: SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES #2.

11. DEVELOP A POLICY FRAMEWORK

Objectives:

A new policy framework should be developed that outlines standards, processes and formats for the preparation of policies, guidelines and procedures. The existing policies, procedures and guidelines should be reviewed to ensure conformity with the new framework. A plan should be prepared for the development of new policies where required and the review and modification of existing policies. As strategic initiatives are undertaken, the policy issues should be considered and planned for.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

A TEMPLATE FOR A NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK WAS DEVELOPED. THE NEW POLICY TEMPLATE HAS BEEN USED TO DEVELOP FIVE NEW POLICIES (SEE ITEM # 8. - CONDUCT A REVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR DETAILS).

UPDATE: SEE SHORT-TERM INITIATIVES # 8 FOR NEW POLICIES DEVELOPED IN 2007-2008.

B. MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES (BY APRIL 1, 2007) [WITH UPDATES]

1. Implement the Recommendation from the Organizational Review

Objectives:

This activity must be completed early in the 2006-2007 fiscal year in order to be election ready (organizationally). This may require additional staffing and training and will have an impact on the Election Readiness Plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

AS NOTED IN SHORT-TERM INITIATIVE NUMBER 7, IT WAS DECIDED THAT NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO MAKE ANY MAJOR CHANGES TO THE CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE 26TH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION.

NO UPDATE REQUIRED.

2. Continue to Implement the Change Management Strategy

Objectives:

The implementation of the Change Management Strategy should continue through this medium-term period. Some of the activities may not be concluded as planned due to other critical initiatives, i.e. election readiness activities. It is important to maintain the momentum established in the short-term towards being an organization that embraces change in a proactive manner.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

THE ORGANIZATION HAS EMBRACED CHANGE AS EVIDENCED IN:

- THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BY-ELECTION IN WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY;
- THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BY-ELECTION IN MARTENSVILLE;
- PREPARATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION;
- OVERALL ATTITUDE OF LOOKING FOR POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO ALL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANIZATION WHILE BEING CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE CHANGES JUST FOR CHANGE SAKE IF THE PROCESS IS WORKING WELL AS IT IS.

THE ORGANIZATION CONTINUES TO EMBRACE CHANGE WITH CHANGES SUCH AS THE NEW RETURNING OFFICER'S MANUAL, NEW MANUAL FOR DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICERS AND POLL CLERKS, NEW TRAINING FOR RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS AND PRE-WRIT ACTION PLANS AND OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION.

UPDATE: TWENTY-SIXTH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION

ENUMERATION AND ABSENTEE VOTING MATERIALS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL RETURNING OFFICERS IN MAY, 2007. WITH THE NOVEMBER 7, 2007 GENERAL ELECTION, ELECTIONS IN SASKATCHEWAN HAVE MOVED FROM THE "TECHNICAL ELECTION" OF THE PAST TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A CULTURE OF CHANGE AND MODERNIZATION ALONG WITH A NEW "SERVICE-ORIENTED ATTITUDE". THERE WERE MANY NEW INITIATIVES AND CHANGES AS OUTLINED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES/NEW INITIATIVES

(a) RECRUITMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS

- ONE OF THE MAJOR RECENT AMENDMENTS TO *THE ELECTION ACT, 1996* WAS THE CHANGE FROM RETURNING OFFICERS BEING IDENTIFIED AND APPOINTED BY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, TO BEING RECRUITED AND APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER BASED ON MERIT. POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS WERE DEVELOPED USING BACKGROUND MATERIALS AND EXAMPLES FROM ELECTIONS MANITOBA, ELECTIONS BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ELECTIONS QUÉBEC. SIXTEEN RETURNING OFFICERS WERE APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER UNDER THE OPEN COMPETITIVE PROCESS. TEN RETURNING OFFICERS WERE DIRECT APPOINTMENTS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER WHERE THERE WAS ONLY ONE APPLICANT OR WHERE THE VACANCY OCCURRED IN THE CRITICAL PRE-WRIT PERIOD OR DURING THE ELECTION. THE AGE DEMOGRAPHIC FOR RETURNING OFFICERS HAS DECREASED DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF MERIT-BASED APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER.

(b) IMPROVED TRAINING FOR RETURNING OFFICERS/ELECTION CLERKS

- THE ALL-PARTY COMMITTEE (WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATION FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER) MET IN 2004 TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE ELECTION ACT, 1996. WHEN IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT RETURNING OFFICERS BE APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER IT WAS ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT "ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN BE ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE MORE AND ONGOING TRAINING TO RETURNING OFFICERS, INCLUDING TRAINING ABOUT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY".
- IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE DURATION AND FORMAT OF TRAINING NEEDED TO CHANGE DRAMATICALLY WITH THE REALIZATION THAT APPROXIMATELY 50 PER CENT OF THE RETURNING OFFICERS AND 60 PER CENT OF THE ELECTION CLERKS HAD NOT ACTED IN THAT POSITION PREVIOUSLY AND DUE TO MANY CHANGES IN THE LEGISLATION, POLICY AND FORMS SINCE THE LAST ELECTION.
- THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER DESIGNED THE TRAINING PROGRAM WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS. THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER PERFORMED THE ROLE OF TRAINER FOR THE SIX TRAINING SESSIONS (TWO IN SASKATOON/ FOUR IN REGINA) WITH ASSISTANCE FROM FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS AND THE MANAGER OF ELECTIONS FINANCES. THE LAST OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS, FOR REPLACEMENT APPOINTMENTS, WAS HELD IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 2007. A LONGER THREE-DAY TRAINING PERIOD, SMALLER CLASS SIZE, GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING, ROLE PLAYING AND SOME POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS BY OUR SOFTWARE DEVELOPER (ESPREE) AND A CANADA POST REPRESENTATIVE ADDED TO THE VARIETY. FEEDBACK FROM RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS WAS VERY POSITIVE.

(c) NEW MANUALS, FORMS AND MATERIALS

- THE RETURNING OFFICER'S MANUAL WAS RE-WRITTEN IN SIMPLER LANGUAGE, IN ROUGHLY CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER AND WITH PAGE NUMBERS, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THREE RETURNING OFFICERS. IT WAS WELL RECEIVED BY PREVIOUS AND NEW RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS. MANUALS FOR DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICERS AND POLL CLERKS FOR REGULAR POLLS AND FOR SPECIAL POLLS WERE DEVELOPED AND USED IN THE GENERAL ELECTION FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1995. A NUMBER OF FORMS WERE REVISED FOR THIS ELECTION. A NEW TEMPLATE FOR BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED VOTERS WAS ALSO DEVELOPED FOR THIS ELECTION.

(d) FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS

- IT WAS DECIDED TO CREATE THE POSITION OF FIELD LIAISON OFFICER (FLO) IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MORE SERVICE TO ASSIST RETURNING OFFICERS (ROs). MATERIALS FROM ELECTIONS CANADA, ELECTIONS ONTARIO, AND ELECTION MANITOBA SERVED AS A GUIDE TO CREATE THE FLO STATEMENT OF WORK, MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (CONTRACT) ETC. THE SIX FLOs AND ONE PART-TIME FLO WERE ALL FORMER ROs FROM ACROSS THE PROVINCE. THE FLOs OPERATED FROM THEIR HOME AND ASSISTED ROs WITH PROBLEM SOLVING, DAILY LIAISON BETWEEN ROs AND THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER (OCEO) AND "KEEPING THE ROs, PARTICULARLY BRAND NEW ROs, ON TRACK". DAILY CONFERENCE CALLS DURING THE ELECTION WERE HELD BETWEEN FLOs AND THE OCEO.
- ADMINISTRATION OF CUMBERLAND BY-ELECTION (UPDATE)
ON JANUARY 3, 2008 THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY MLA FOR CUMBERLAND RESIGNED TO RUN AS THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE IN THE MARCH 17, 2008 DESNETHE-MISINIPPI-CHURCHILL RIVER FEDERAL BY-ELECTION. GIVEN THAT THE GENERAL ELECTION WAS SUCH A SHORT TIME AGO, THERE WAS MINIMAL OPPORTUNITY TO TRY ANY NEW INITIATIVES OTHER THAN USING THE NEXT VERSION OF THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PERMANENT REGISTER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS (ESPREE) SOFTWARE – PHASE II – AN ELECTRONIC LIST OF ELECTORS BASED ON THE ALBERTA REGISTER OF ELECTORS SYSTEM (AROS).

3. Develop an Information Technology Strategy

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan's headquarters technology requirements are likely to be impacted by the studies conducted in the short-term in regards to implementing a permanent electronic voters' list, implementing a contact centre, implementing an election finance reporting system and potentially by some of the outreach strategies selected. It is important to consider the development of an Information Technology Strategy once these other studies are completed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

THIS STUDY WOULD RESULT IN A BLUEPRINT FOR:

- THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPUTERIZED BUSINESS SOLUTIONS (THE APPLICATIONS ARCHITECTURE);
- THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOFTWARE STANDARDS (THE SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE);
- THE INSTALLATION OF A STANDARDIZED COMPUTER HARDWARE INFRASTRUCTURE;
- THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK (VOICE AND DATA); AND
- USING THE INTERNET (ENABLING TECHNOLOGY, NOT CONTENT).

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PERMANENT REGISTER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS (ESPREE)

- IN THE SPRING OF 2006 THE OFFICE ENGAGED THE SERVICES OF A SYSTEMS CONSULTING FIRM TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO ELECTION ALBERTA'S WEB-BASED AROS SOFTWARE TO MAKE IT THE SASKATCHEWAN SPECIFIC ESPREE SOFTWARE. THE FIRM THAT THE OFFICE HAS ENGAGED IS THE ORIGINAL FIRM THAT DEVELOPED AROS AND HAS CUSTOMIZED THE SOFTWARE FOR ELECTIONS NWT AND ELECTIONS NUNAVUT. THE SOFTWARE CHANGES RELATED TO THE LIST OF ELECTORS WERE OPERATIVE BY DECEMBER 2006 (PHASE I – RELEASE 1). AFTER THE MARTENSVILLE BY-ELECTION SOME TWEAKING WAS DONE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SUGGESTIONS FROM THE AUTOMATION COORDINATOR AND DATA ENTRY OPERATORS AND TO EXPAND ITS USE TO A GENERAL ELECTION (PHASE I – RELEASE 2).

- PHASE II WAS COMPLETED WITH FURTHER UPDATES FOR THE VOTERS' LIST AND AN ELECTIONS MODULE (POLLS, POLLING PLACES, CANDIDATES AND BALLOTS), BUT NOT SUFFICIENTLY TESTED TO USE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION. PHASE 2 OF ESPREE WAS USED IN THE CUMBERLAND BY-ELECTION.

4. Implement the Elections Finance Reporting System

Objectives:

The system developed should be introduced to the stakeholders involved in some form of a focus group to get feedback and reactions to the new application, (i.e. consultation, before a formal roll-out and training exercise is scheduled). This will be critical to the successful implementation of this system.

A comprehensive familiarization and training plan should be established as a part of the roll-out strategy for this critically important system.

If a by-election occurs, it would be a valuable learning experience prior to using this system for the first time in a general election. Since these are beyond the purview of Elections Saskatchewan, it may be worth considering a By-Election simulation activity, if no other opportunities arise.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

DUE TO BUDGET REDUCTIONS THIS PROJECT WAS SHELVED FOR THE 2006-2007 AND 2007-2008 FISCAL YEARS.

UPDATE: THIS PROJECT IS ON HOLD AS THE BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY (BOIE) FAILED TO APPROVE ITS FUNDING FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009.

5. Implement the Contact Centre Strategy

Objectives:

This will be a key element in communicating with stakeholders and issues identification and management in the next general election. The recommendations from the strategic study should be implemented as soon as possible and included in the Elections Readiness Plan.

There is a direct linkage between the Contact Centre operation and the outreach/advertising campaigns. The integration of these plans is critical to the actual success of the Contact Centre in regards to the preparation of frequently asked questions/answers and the development of staffing and training plans.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL WAS POSTED FOR TENDER EARLIER IN THE 2006/2007 FISCAL YEAR. THE SUCCESSFUL BIDDER WAS IDENTIFIED AND A ONE DAY SCOPING SESSION WAS PENDING.

UPDATE: A ONE DAY SCOPING SESSION WAS HELD IN EARLY JUNE 2007. THE CONTACT CENTRE STAFF WAS TRAINED IN EARLY OCTOBER, 2007. THE CONTACT CENTRE WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL. IT ANSWERED 97% OF THE CALLS DIRECTED TO IT (OVER 12,000 CALLS). HAVING THE CALL CENTRE TO ANSWER ROUTINE ELECTORAL QUESTIONS FREED UP STAFF TIME IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER IN ORDER TO GIVE INCREASED SERVICE TO CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES. AT A RECENT DEBRIEFING MEETING POLITICAL PARTIES THANKED THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER FOR THE INCREASE IN SERVICE/RESPONSE TIME.

6. Implementation of Outreach Strategies

Objectives:

This activity is a follow-up to the Outreach Strategies Strategic Initiative conducted in the short-term. It will include the development of an action plan to implement the recommendations from the previous study. This plan will include activities to be conducted in the period leading up to the next anticipated general provincial election in 2007, as well as activities to be conducted during the election period.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

UPDATE: COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES DURING THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION

ABORIGINAL PERSONS

- OUR ADVERTISING AGENCY WAS CONTRACTED IN JANUARY 2007 TO DEVELOP A PROPOSAL TO INCREASE FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PARTICIPATION IN VOTING. AS A RESULT:
 - A COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT WAS HIRED FOR THE SUMMER TO DO RESEARCH REGARDING THE CREATION OF SEVERAL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER POSITIONS FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION AND TO WORK WITH OUR ADVERTISING AGENCY TO PRODUCE A BROCHURE DIRECTED AT ABORIGINAL VOTERS. THIS PROGRAM WAS A GOOD START BUT RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING FOR THESE POSITIONS WILL BE MUCH EASIER WHEN WE HAVE A FIXED DATE FOR THE NEXT ELECTION.
 - ADVERTISING ON NORTHERN RADIO STATIONS USING ABORIGINAL VOICES IN ENGLISH, CREE AND DENE WERE WELL RECEIVED IN NORTHERN CONSTITUENCIES.

ADVERTISING

- IN PAST ELECTIONS THE OFFICE HAD A SERIES OF FIVE NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS WHICH WERE VERY LEGALISTIC AND OVERLY WORDY. IN DISCUSSION WITH OUR ADVERTISING AGENCY WE REDUCED THE SERIES TO FOUR NEWSPAPER ADS, SIMPLIFIED THE TEXT, AND MADE THE DESIGN MORE VISUALLY APPEALING, ADDED A SLOGAN "YOUR PROVINCE, YOUR VOTE" (AS A WAY OF ENCOURAGING VOTER TURNOUT), PLACED A VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE AS AN INSERT IN FREE YOUTH ORIENTED/ENTERTAINMENT/ ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPERS IN REGINA AND SASKATOON AND ADDED RADIO ADVERTISING.

BROCHURES

- A SERIES OF ABSENTEE VOTING BROCHURES WERE PRODUCED FOR TRAVELLERS, MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN FORCES, AND INMATES OF CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS. THE STUDENT/YOUTH VOTING BROCHURE WAS REVISED AND A BROCHURE DIRECTED AT ABORIGINAL VOTERS WAS DEVELOPED. THE APPLICABLE BROCHURES OR AN E-MAIL LETTER WITH LINKS TO THE FORM ON THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE WERE DISTRIBUTED TO TRAVEL AGENCIES, MAJOR AIRPORTS, CANADIAN EMBASSIES AND HIGH COMMISSIONS, CANADIAN FORCES BASES, THE LONG DISTANCE TRUCKING ASSOCIATION AND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS BOTH IN THE PROVINCE AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

GUIDES FOR CANDIDATES, BUSINESS MANAGERS AND AUDITORS

- THE GUIDES FOR CANDIDATES, BUSINESS MANAGERS, AND AUDITORS WERE REWRITTEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT CHANGES IN LEGISLATION, A DESIRE TO MAKE THE GUIDES MORE USER-FRIENDLY AND A REQUEST THAT REFERENCES TO *THE ELECTION ACT, 1996* BE CROSS REFERENCED THROUGHOUT. ALL THREE GUIDES, THE CANDIDATES RETURN OF ELECTION EXPENSES AND ALL ASSOCIATED FORMS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON CD.

VOTER INFORMATION CARDS

- VOTER INFORMATION CARDS (VICs) WERE PILOTED DURING THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY AND MARTENSVILLE BY-ELECTIONS. AS A RESULT OF OUR PILOTS AND THE RESULTING RELATIONSHIP WITH CANADA POST, THIS COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLE WAS EXPANDED TO THE GENERAL ELECTION. THE VICs WERE DELIVERED ONE WEEK PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY AND BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF ADVANCE POLLS. THERE WAS A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE VICs FROM MANY VOTERS.

WEB SITE

- IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 2007, THE OFFICE WORKED WITH OUR WEB SITE CONTRACTOR TO MAKE THE CURRENT ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE MORE "USER-FRIENDLY". A SUMMER STUDENT BUILT ON THE WORK OF TWO CANADA WORLD YOUTH PROGRAM INTERNS FROM THE SUMMER OF 2005 IN ORDER TO ADD A YOUTH SECTION TO THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE. THE WEB SITE WAS USED EXTENSIVELY BY THE CONTACT CENTRE STAFF. DURING OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2007 THE WEB SITE RECEIVED OVER TWO MILLION HITS EACH MONTH!

YOUTH

- ADVERTISING ON RADIO STATIONS ACROSS THE PROVINCE AND IN YOUTH ORIENTED /ENTERTAINMENT/ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPERS WAS WELL RECEIVED AS A WAY TO BETTER REACH THE YOUTH DEMOGRAPHIC.
- A COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT WAS HIRED FOR THE SUMMER OF 2007 TO:
 - UPDATE THE WORK DONE BY CANADA WORLD YOUTH STUDENTS TO CREATE A "YOUTH WEB SITE";
 - ENHANCE THE STUDENT/YOUTH BROCHURE;
 - PROVIDE GENERAL ASSISTANCE REGARDING REVISIONS TO WEB SITE CONTENT; AND
 - RESEARCH THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING TWO YOUTH COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER POSITIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.
- THERE WERE TWO YOUTH COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER POSITIONS IN THE GENERAL ELECTION. THIS WAS A GOOD START TO THE PROGRAM. A FIXED DATE FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION WILL MAKE RECRUITING, TRAINING AND PLANNING FOR THE PROGRAM MUCH EASIER.

- DESPITE NUMEROUS ATTEMPTS, THE OFFICE WAS NOT ABLE TO COORDINATE ANY COOPERATION WITH THE "STUDENT VOTE" ORGANIZATION DUE TO THE TIMING OF THE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTION.
- THE VOTER TURNOUT INCREASED FROM 70.95% IN THE 2003 GENERAL ELECTION TO 76.02 % IN THE 2007 GENERAL ELECTION, AN INCREASE OF OVER 5%. WHILE ELECTORAL COMPETITION MAY BE ONE EXPLANATION FOR THE INCREASE IN VOTER TURNOUT, THE OFFICE'S INCREASED COMMUNICATIONS MAY BE ANOTHER PARTIAL EXPLANATION.

7. Implement the Automation of Electoral Geography Product Strategies

Objectives:

The activity is dependant on the study being conducted in the short-term. The implementation plan will be based on the recommendations from the earlier strategic initiative and must be completed and in place prior to the next anticipated general election. The electoral map products required are critical to the conduct of an election for Election Saskatchewan elections workers, the political parties and candidates for campaign purposes and for the general public to know the electoral boundaries and what constituency they are eligible to vote in.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- FOR STAFFING AND FINANCIAL REASONS IT WAS DECIDED NOT TO DO A COMPLETE REMAPPING OF ALL 58 CONSTITUENCIES. REVISED MAPS WERE PRODUCED FOR THOSE CONSTITUENCIES WHERE THE MOST RESIDENTIAL GROWTH HAS OCCURRED SINCE THE LAST ELECTION. AT THE TIME OF WRITING FIVE CONSTITUENCIES HAVE BEEN REMAPPED (REGINA NORTHEAST, REGINA QU'APPELLE VALLEY, REGINA WASCANA PLAINS, SASKATOON SILVER SPRINGS AND SASKATOON SOUTHEAST. AT THE TIME OF WRITING TWO MORE CONSTITUENCIES (MARTENSVILLE AND REGINA DEWDNEY) ARE NEARING COMPLETION IN THE PROCESS OF REMAPPING.

UPDATE: IN TOTAL SEVEN CONSTITUENCIES WERE REMAPPED IN 2007 FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION: MARTENSVILLE, REGINA DEWDNEY, REGINA NORTHEAST, REGINA QU'APPELLE VALLEY, REGINA WASCANA PLAINS, SASKATOON SILVER SPRINGS AND SASKATOON SOUTHEAST. THE LLOYDMINSTER CONSTITUENCY WAS REMAPPED IN 2004 FOR USE IN THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION. ALL OF THESE MAPS WERE DONE IN THE TRADITIONAL MANNER.

MUCH MORE WORK WILL NEED TO BE DONE ON THE AUTOMATION OF ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY PRODUCTS. THIS WORK IS ALSO DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS. IF THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS IS CONFIRMED THROUGH ADDITIONAL CHANGES TO *THE ELECTIONS ACT, 1996* OR NEW REGULATIONS, THEN MORE RESOURCES WILL BE REQUIRED TO AUTOMATE ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY PRODUCTS.

DUE TO POPULATION CHANGES, BOTH UP AND DOWN, ACROSS THE PROVINCE A FULL REVIEW OF THE POLLING DIVISION (INTERNAL) BOUNDARIES IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO THE NOVEMBER 7, 2011 GENERAL ELECTION. WHILE THESE MAPS COULD CONTINUE TO BE DONE THE "OLD-FASHIONED WAY", IT IS ADVISABLE TO MOVE TOWARDS DIGITAL MAPPING.

ALSO IN THE LONGER TERM, AS IT GETS CLOSER TO THE YEAR 2012, IT WOULD ALSO BE ADVISABLE TO MOVE TO DIGITAL MAPPING TO ASSIST THE CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES COMMISSION 2012 WHEN IT BEGINS ITS DELIBERATIONS TO REVIEW AND CHANGE THE CONSTITUENCY (EXTERNAL) BOUNDARIES.

ALSO SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVE #9.

8. Implement Changes from Bill 119

Objectives:

This initiative is dependant on the recommendations and plans developed as part of the Strategic Impacts Analysis conducted in the short-term. This is a critical initiative that must be completed prior to the next election.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES FROM BILL 119 IS ALMOST COMPLETE PENDING AN EVALUATION OF THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION.

AFTER THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION SEVERAL INITIATIVES WERE TWEAKED SLIGHTLY AND THE RECRUITMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER WAS IMPLEMENTED AS BELOW:

- ONE OF THE MAJOR RECENT AMENDMENTS TO *THE ELECTION ACT, 1996* WAS THE CHANGE FROM RETURNING OFFICERS BEING IDENTIFIED AND APPOINTED BY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO BEING RECRUITED AND APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, BASED ON MERIT. POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS WERE DEVELOPED USING BACKGROUND MATERIALS AND EXAMPLES FROM ELECTIONS MANITOBA, ELECTIONS BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ELECTIONS QUEBEC.
- AFTER COMPLETING AN APPLICATION FORM, SHORT-LISTED APPLICANTS WERE DIRECTED TO TAKE A "PREVUE TEST". THIS TEST, TAKEN ON A HOME COMPUTER, IDENTIFIED POSSIBLE AREAS WHERE THE SKILLS OF THE APPLICANT WERE ABOVE OR BELOW THE BENCHMARK SET BY ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN FOR THE POSITION. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PRINT-OUT WAS PRODUCED FOR EACH SHORT-LISTED APPLICANT IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE QUESTIONS WITH RESPECT TO AREAS WHERE THE APPLICANT WAS BELOW THE BENCHMARK (THIS PROCESS WAS MANAGED BY A CONSULTANT WHO HAD DONE SIMILAR WORK FOR ELECTIONS BC).
- FROM JANUARY UNTIL APRIL, 2007 THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY INTERVIEWED THE APPLICANTS IN REGINA, MOOSE JAW OR SASKATOON.
- THE AGE DEMOGRAPHIC FOR RETURNING OFFICERS HAS DECREASED DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF MERIT-BASED APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER.

UPDATE: DURING THE 2007-2008 FISCAL YEAR SIXTEEN NEW RETURNING OFFICERS WERE APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER THROUGH A COMPETATIVE MERIT-BASED INTERVIEW PROCESS. IN ADDITION TEN RETURNING OFFICERS WERE APPOINTED VIA DIRECT APPOINTMENT BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER FOR REASON OF DIFFICULTY RECRUITING DUE TO LOCATION, DURING A CRITICAL PRE-WRIT PERIOD OR DURING THE ELECTION.

9. Prepare a Plan to Implement a Permanent Electronic Voters' List.

Objectives:

This initiative is dependant on the results of the impact analysis study and regulations that will be developed after Bill 119 is enacted.

The focus of this initiative will be on ensuring that the Chief Electoral Officer is positioned to meet the objectives outlined when Bill 119 was introduced. At the second reading of Bill 119 there was an announcement that "One of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voters' list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voter's list."

Without pre-supposing the content of the set of regulations developed or the results of the impact analysis and recommendations, this initiative will be a major undertaking for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Currently there are no processes, procedures, guidelines or technological tools in place to meet this requirement.

In addition, this initiative is directly linked to the automation of electoral geography products initiative. The key to a successful electronic register of voters is knowing where the eligible electors live, i.e. a physical address, so that they can be directed to vote in the proper constituency and the correct polling division within that constituency. Since people move and addresses don't it is critical to have an automated geography system with all addresses pinpointed within the electoral boundaries. This becomes more complex in rural settings where physical addresses are more difficult to determine and automate.

Another critical success or risk factor that must be considered is timing. With less than two years to the next anticipated provincial general election, it may be prudent to focus on implementing a phased approach to developing a permanent electronic voters' list for Saskatchewan.

Other Canadian electoral jurisdictions have followed an approach of developing the tools, processes and procedures to collect the voter information from a final enumeration (either prior to or during an electoral event) as a basis for the implementation of a permanent register of voters. In these situations the development of complex technology tools (integrated with electoral geography computer systems) and the implementation of reliable data sources to maintain the registers were conducted outside the pressures of getting ready for and conducting an electoral event.

All of the above must be seriously considered by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in the conduct of this important initiative.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

THERE HAS BEEN SOME PROGRESS WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ESPREE SOFTWARE PROGRAM (SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES # 3 EARLIER IN THIS DOCUMENT).

UPDATE:

THERE HAVE BEEN NO REGULATIONS FORWARDED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF BILL 119. AS A RESULT CERTAIN ASPECTS OF A MOVE TOWARDS A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS ARE AT A STANDSTILL AND WILL HAVE TO BE CARRIED OUT AT SOME FUTURE DATE. AN ELECTRONIC LIST OF ELECTORS IS NOW POSSIBLE WITH THE ADVENT OF THE ESPREE SOFTWARE. IT WILL NOT HOWEVER BE A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS BECAUSE THERE ARE NO REGULATIONS TO SET DOWN HOW THE PROCESS OF UPDATING THE LIST OF ELECTORS FROM VARIOUS DATA-SOURCES WILL BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN THE ENUMERATION WHICH TOOK PLACE AT THE CALL OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION AND THE CALL OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ELECTION.

AS MENTIONED IN THE OBJECTIVE SECTION, TO MOVE TOWARDS A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS OTHER JURISDICTIONS HAVE HAD A "FINAL FULL ENUMERATION" PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS. GIVEN THAT THE PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN NOW HAS A FIXED DATE ELECTION, AN ENUMERATION OUTSIDE OF THE WRIT PERIOD COULD BE SET FOR SEPTEMBER 2011, ENSURING THAT THE INFORMATION IS NOT "STALE" (OVER SIX MONTHS OLD) AND TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE BASE FOR A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS TO GO FORWARD.

10. Develop Strategies to Measure Stakeholder Satisfaction

Objectives:

Strategies should be developed to measure stakeholder satisfaction before, during and after the next election. These strategies will be related to a large degree by the outreach campaigns conducted by Elections Saskatchewan. All stakeholders should be consulted in some meaningful manner. This will provide measurements and benchmarks to assess the results of the new strategies and activities implemented that can be used to make corrections to current practices, introduce new practices and continue the change management culture of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

NO ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE:

UPDATE:

A BUDGET ITEM OF \$33,000 (2007-2008) AND \$30,000 (2008-2009) FOR STRATEGIES TO MEASURE STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION DID NOT RECEIVE APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY FROM THE OFFICE'S 2007-2008 BUDGET NOR ITS 2008-2009 BUDGET. THIS INCLUDED THE COST OF A PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY OF MLAS, THE PUBLIC AND REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES. AS A RESULT THE OBJECTIVES FOR THIS INITIATIVE WILL BE DEFERRED FURTHER INTO THE LONG-TERM INITIATIVES.

C. LONG-TERM INITIATIVES (BY APRIL 1, 2011)

1. Become a Leader for Electoral Reform in Saskatchewan

Objectives:

The baseline for a renewed electoral system for the Province of Saskatchewan will be established through the completion of the strategic initiatives outlined in the short and medium terms of this strategy.

In the longer term, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will become a leader for electoral reform in the province. Through the inventive introduction of electoral administration "best practices" and the innovative use of technology, in particular the permanent electronic voters' list, Elections Saskatchewan will establish credentials as a leader in the "elections business". This credibility will enable the Chief Electoral Officer to take the next step of building collaborative relationships with other government agencies and electoral jurisdictions across the province and the country. This, in turn, will create opportunities for the negotiation of sharing agreements across the province with municipalities and school boards and potentially other partners in electoral jurisdictions in the rest of Canada.

These groundbreaking partnerships and joint ventures will provide an opportunity to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of conducting electoral processes in Saskatchewan. There is a strong potential to contain the overall costs of conducting elections (there is only one taxpayer!); make the electoral process more transparent to the electorate and other stakeholders; improve the awareness of the electorate of their democratic rights; and, possibly assist in reversing the trend of lower voter turnout.

Accomplishments:

SEE LONG-TERM INITIATIVES – OBJECTIVE #3.

2. Continue to Implement Change Management Concepts

Objectives:

The change management concepts initiated in the short and medium terms will be expanded as the culture becomes more deeply embedded in the organization.

The mission, values and vision developed in this strategic plan will be revisited and updated to accommodate the evolving environment of electoral management as required.

The professional development of staff will be more fully addressed and become a key focus in the longer-term

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

SEE LONG-TERM INITIATIVES – OBJECTIVE #3.

3. Conduct a Comprehensive Post Election Review

Objectives:

A comprehensive post election review must be conducted. All of the stakeholder measurements and benchmarks conducted before during and after the election need to be reviewed and evaluated. It is critical to know and understand what worked, what did not and why. Further stakeholder consultations will be required as well.

This analysis will be a key ingredient in the preparation of the post election report to the Legislature and will ensure that legislative, policy, procedures, guidelines, operational processes, and other issues are identified and dealt with. This activity is critical to improving the electoral process and the establishment of new goals and objectives for the organization. It is equally important that all stakeholders are aware that this will take place, that they are included in the process and that they are privy to the results of this review.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- SINCE JANUARY OF 2008 THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER HAS BEEN HOLDING A SERIES OF DEBRIEFINGS WITH IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS. RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS CLERKS WERE INVITED TO ATTEND THE FIRST EVER ONE – DAY DEBRIEFING HELD IN EITHER SASKATOON OR REGINA. MANY EXCELLENT SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES TO OFFICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND LEGISLATION WERE DISCUSSED. THIS IN-PERSON DEBRIEFING WAS IN ADDITION TO A WRITTEN DEBRIEFING REQUESTED OF ROS, ALSO FOR THE FIRST TIME.
- DEBRIEFINGS WERE ALSO HELD WITH FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS, AUTOMATION COORDINATORS, THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, MAJOR SUPPLIERS SUCH AS CANADA POST, OUR ADVERTISING AGENCY, MAIN PRINTER, SASKTEL, THE CONTACT CENTRE, HEALTH REGION STAFF, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES. ALL OF THE DEBRIEFINGS HAVE BEEN VERY USEFUL IN GETTING FEEDBACK AND WILL GO A LONG WAY IN HELPING THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER TO PRODUCE VOLUME III OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER’S REPORT ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION WHICH WILL FOCUS ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO *THE ELECTION ACT, 1996*.
- IN THE UPCOMING YEAR CHANGES TO POLICIES, PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES, OPERATIONAL PROCESSES, AND OTHER ISSUES WILL BE IDENTIFIED FROM THE DEBRIEFINGS AND DEALT WITH AS PREPARATIONS BEGIN FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION.

4. Implement a Permanent Electronic Voters’ List

Objectives:

This initiative is dependant on the results of the impact analysis study and the subsequent approval of the Legislature. The basis for this activity will be the implementation plan developed as a strategic initiative in the medium-term.

This project is directly linked to the automation of electoral geography products initiative that was identified in the short and medium term activities. The key to a successful register of voters is knowing where the eligible electors live, i.e. a physical address, so that they can be directed to vote in the proper constituency and the correct polling division within that constituency. Since people move and addresses don't, it is critical to have an automated geography system with all addresses pinpointed within the electoral boundaries. This becomes more complex in rural settings where physical addresses are more difficult to determine and automate.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NO ACCOMPLISHMENTS YET, PENDING REGULATIONS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO MOVE TO TOWARDS A PERMANENT ELECTRONIC VOTERS' LIST AND AUTOMATED ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY. IT IS ALSO ADVISABLE TO INVEST IN ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY SOFTWARE SOON IN ORDER TO:

- **IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ELECTORAL MAPS WHEN THE POLLING DIVISION BOUNDARIES INSIDE ALL 58 CONSTITUENCIES ARE REVIEWED IN THE NEXT 12-24 MONTHS DUE TO POPULATION SHIFTS ACROSS THE PROVINCE. THE EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE BOUNDARIES COMMISSION IN 2012. ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY SOFTWARE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THAT PURPOSE.**
- **IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY THIS OFFICE TO THE 2012 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION.**

5. Develop and Implement a New Cadre of Outreach Initiatives

Objectives:

The results of the outreach initiatives developed in the short and medium terms should be reviewed as a first step in the development of a new outreach strategy.

The new outreach strategy should have a minimum four-year window leading to the next anticipated general provincial election. It should also recognize and take the advantage of opportunities to test the event-related initiatives identified in By-Elections that may occur over this time period.

The strategy should examine the opportunities to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education and other agencies or organizations to develop and implement education programs to raise the awareness of all sectors of the electorate in regards to the electoral process and their democratic rights and privileges. Again, there will be a strong emphasis on targeting the youth (eighteen to twenty-four year olds) and First Nations sectors of the population, but other target sectors should be identified and addressed as well.

The innovative use of the internet as an information conduit should be studied to take advantage of the high penetration of usage by all sectors of the populace and in particular as the education system makes more extensive use as an educational support tool.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

SOME SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS WERE MADE IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH YOUTH AND FIRST NATIONS/MÉTIS VOTERS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION (SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVES - OBJECTIVE #6 EARLIER IN THIS DOCUMENT). MORE EFFORTS NEED TO OCCUR.

THE BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY (BOIE) DENIED \$5,000 TO CONTINUE OUTREACH WITH ABORIGINAL AND YOUTH VOTERS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2008-2009.

6. Implement the Information Technology Strategy

Objectives:

One of the medium-term strategic initiatives identified was the development of an Information Technology Strategy. The recommendations from that study should be reviewed, updated and implemented to meet Elections Saskatchewan's operational requirements.

This implementation will need to include requirements identified from the studies on automating electoral geography and implementing a permanent electronic voters' list.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVE #3 FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ELECTRONIC LIST OF ELECTORS.
- NO OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS YET, PENDING AUTOMATED ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY AND A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS.
- THE BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY (BOIE) DENIED \$85,000 FOR CAPITAL ACQUISITION TO CONTINUE TO UPGRADE MODULE ONE (ESPREE) BASED ON FEEDBACK FROM A DEBRIEFING OF AUTOMATION CO-ORDINATORS FROM THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION. WORK ON THE ELECTION RESULTS AND ELECTION FINANCE MODELS ARE ALSO DELAYED.
- DUE TO THE LONG LEAD TIME FOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT AND THE BEST PRACTISE OF TESTING OUT NEW SOFTWARE DURING A BY-ELECTION THERE IS A LIMITED WINDOW FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT.

VI. ANNUAL ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN ACTIVITIES

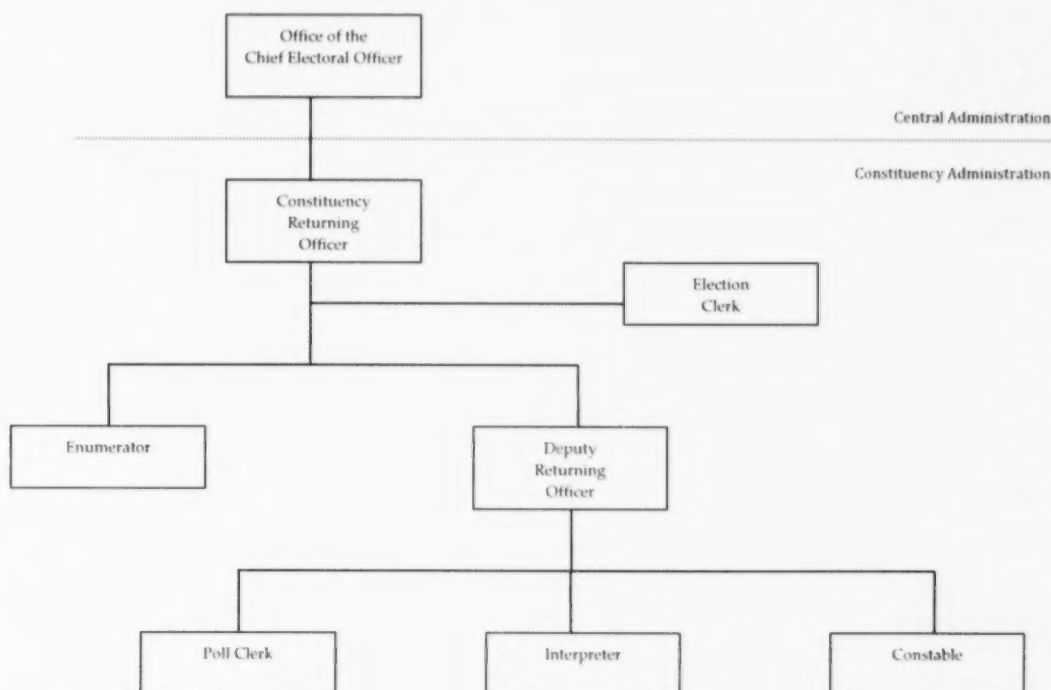
The mandate of the Office is defined by the unique and complex character of Saskatchewan's polity, including the inherent uncertainty of the provincial electoral cycle, the decentralized nature of electoral administration, and the multi-layered interaction among registered political parties, candidates and the electorate.

This section outlines specific Office activities undertaken to maintain a state of provincial election readiness.

A. Constituency Returning Officers

Central electoral administration is the responsibility of the Office, with regional operational conduct of electoral events being the responsibility of constituency returning officers. As representatives of the Office, constituency returning officers are entrusted with advancing the neutrality of the Province's decentralized electoral process by administering and reporting on electoral proceedings (general or By-Elections, referenda and plebiscites). The decentralized nature of Elections Saskatchewan's electoral administration is depicted in the schematic below.

Decentralized Electoral Administration – Elections Saskatchewan.



An important part of maintaining election readiness is having constituency returning officer appointments for the Province's fifty-eight constituencies. All constituency returning officer appointments/cancellations from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, as promulgated in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*, are set out in the following table.

CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS
(AS OF MARCH 31, 2008)

ORDER IN COUNCIL DATE/NUMBER	DATE GAZETTED VOLUME/NUMBER	APPOINTMENTS/CANCELLATIONS
February 12, 2003 (O.C. 56/2003)	June 1, 2007 (Vol. 103 No. 22)	<i>Cancellation:</i> Arm River - Watrous - Evelyn Edwards; Athabasca - Robert Desjarlais; Batoche - Norbert Hirschhorn; Carrot River Valley - Bonnie E. Halverson; Indian Head-Milestone - Michelle Ecarnot; Moose Jaw North - Dale McBain; Regina Coronation Park - Linda Kydd; Regina Qu'Appelle Valley - Donna Bannman; Rosthern-Shellbrook - Raymond Ewanchuk; Saskatoon Eastview - Harry Pitzel; Saskatoon Fairview - Danita Hingston; Saskatoon Greystone - Eileen Anne Ritter; Saskatoon Massey Place - Shirley D. McDade; Saskatoon Nutana - Thelma J. Cvek; Saskatoon Silver Springs - Eleanore D. Macdonald; Thunder Creek - Marlene Paproski; Wood River - Emile Gobeil.
N/A	June 1, 2007 (Vol. 103 No. 22)	<i>Appointment:</i> Arm River - Watrous - Noreen Johns; Athabasca - Martin Corrigan; Batoche - Carmelle Cournoyer; Carrot River Valley - Volodimer (Wally) Derkach; Indian Head-Milestone - Elaine Weimer; Regina Coronation Park - Roger Sydorko; Moose Jaw North - Marylynn Smith; Regina Qu'Appelle Valley - Tanya Lunnin; Rosthern - Shellbrook - Ellen Wood; Saskatoon Eastview - Nadine Reeves; Saskatoon Fairview - Eileen Ermondi; Saskatoon Greystone - Karen Amundson; Saskatoon Massey Place - Robyn McGregor; Saskatoon Nutana - Michael Fisher; Saskatoon Silver Springs - Jane Gary; Thunder Creek - Lynne Saas; Wood River - Barbara Ermel.
August 9, 2005 (O.C. 619/2005)	June 1, 2007 (Vol. 103 No. 22)	<i>Cancellation:</i> Cumberland - Vicky L. Sanderson; Regina - Rosemont - Loretta A. Wessner. <i>Appointment:</i> Cumberland - Marlene Wolkosky; Regina - Rosemont - Bonnie Kreklawetz.
February 24, 2006 (O.C. 86/2006)	June 1, 2007 (Vol. 103 No. 22)	<i>Cancellation:</i> Kelvington - Wadena - Gail Peterson; <i>Appointment:</i> Kelvington - Wadena - Leona Cunningham.
August 26, 2003 (O.C. 660/2003)	October 5, 2007 (Vol. 103 No. 40)	<i>Cancellation:</i> Saskatoon Southeast - Connie Nelson. <i>Appointment:</i> Saskatoon Southeast - Deidre (Dee) Leggott.
N/A	October 5, 2007 (Vol. 103 No. 40)	<i>Cancellation:</i> Saskatoon Fairview - Eileen Ermondi; Saskatoon Greystone - Karen Edmundson. <i>Appointment:</i> Saskatoon Fairview - Rosemarie Hackl; Saskatoon Greystone - Zoe Litman.
February 12, 2003 (O.C. 56/2003)	February, 22, 2008 (Vol. 104 No. 8)	<i>Cancellation:</i> Melfort - Harry Broudy; <i>Appointment:</i> Melfort - Rita Garringer.
N/A	February, 22, 2008 (Vol. 104 No. 8)	<i>Cancellation:</i> Cypress Hills - David G. Hooper; Cypress Hills - Duane Migowsky. <i>Appointment:</i> Cypress Hills - Duane Migowsky; Cypress Hills - Sonja Lidfors.

With the proclamation of amendments to *The Election Act, 1996* proclaimed on March 22, 2006 any vacancies for Returning Officers that occurred after March 22, 2006 are now appointments by the Chief Electoral Officer through an open competitive process.

During the 2007 – 2008 Fiscal year sixteen new Returning Officers were appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer through a competitive interview process. Fifteen of their appointments were gazetted on June 1, 2007, with the sixteenth gazetted on October 5, 2007. In addition, ten new Returning Officers have been appointed via direct appointment by the Chief Electoral Officer for reasons of difficulty recruiting because of location or vacancy during the critical Pre-Writ period. Five of the ten were also Gazetted on June 1, 2007 and two were Gazetted on October 5, 2007. Three of the ten new direct appointments took place during the general election and were gazetted on February 22, 2008.

B. Registered Political Parties

1. Registration

Under section 224 of *The Election Act, 1996*, a political party may apply for registration any time between the days fixed for the return to a writ of general election and the fifth day after the issuance of a writ of election. A registration application must be in prescribed form and be accompanied by a complete and accurate petition for registration. Each petition must be executed by no fewer than 2,500 eligible provincial voters, 1,000 of whom must reside in at least ten provincial constituencies, with a minimum of 100 voters in each of those respective constituencies. Concurrent with its application and petition, a political party must file a written statement declaring that its primary purpose is to field candidates for election as Members of the Legislative Assembly. An audited financial statement must also be filed along with prescribed information in respect of the party's leader, senior officers, chief official agent and auditor.

Once the Office has reviewed all requisite registration documentation and vetted the application, the Chief Electoral Officer will register the political party and, in accordance with section 233 of *The Election Act, 1996*, publish its name in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*. A political party, once registered, is entitled to incur expenses, solicit and receive contribution, participate in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, and field candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly. Registered political parties in an election/by-election year are also entitled, where eligible, to reimbursement of a portion of lawfully incurred election expenses.

On August 24, 2007 the Chief Electoral Officer approved a name change from the "Saskatchewan Heritage Party" to the "Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party". During the general election, prior to the close of nominations, the party leader voluntarily requested the Chief Electoral Officer to deregister the Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party. The Chief Electoral Officer did so effective October 22, 2007.

On March 31, 2008, seven political parties were registered in the Province. Their names, abbreviations, leaders and chief official agents, as recorded on the Register of Political Parties, are set out in the following table.

**REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES
(AS AT MARCH 31, 2008)**

POLITICAL PARTY NAME	PARTY ABBREVIATION	PARTY LEADER	CHIEF OFFICIAL AGENT
Green Party of Saskatchewan	Green Party	Sandra Finley	Amber Jones
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)	Lorne Calvert	Catherine Duncan
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	P.C. Party of Sask.	Rick Swenson	Luke Jacob Schmidt
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	Saskatchewan Liberal Party	Frank Proto	Alan McIntyre
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	Saskatchewan Marijuana Party (SKMP)	Nathan Holowaty	Tanya Derbowka
Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	Wes Becker
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	Western Independence Party (W.I.P.)	John Neddoly	Neil Fenske

In accordance with section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the *Register of Political Parties* is available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. Potential Candidates

In accordance with section 230 of *The Election Act, 1996*, any individual selected to be a candidate by a registered political party's constituency association, or being a person a party intends to endorse, must give written notice to that effect to the Office. Such notification must be filed in conjunction with the candidate's written appointment and consent of a business manager in accordance with section 236, and written appointment and consent of an auditor in accordance with section 238 of *The Election Act, 1996*. The Chief Electoral Office maintains a Register of Potential Candidates and information filed under section 236 and 238 of *The Election Act, 1996* for public review.

As at March 31, 2008, no individuals were registered on the *Register of Potential Candidates*.

3. Annual Financing Reporting

In accordance with section 250 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the chief official agent of a registered political party shall annually file, prior to May 1st, an audited fiscal period return in prescribed form detailing that party's financial activities. This annual financial reporting is undertaken on a *Registered Political Party's Fiscal Period Return* (Form E-521). Form E-521 reporting excludes expenses incurred during an election campaign period - such expenses are reported pursuant to section 251 of *The Election Act, 1996*.

Form E-521 requires that individual donations of money and commercial value exceeding \$250 received in a year from an individual, corporation, trade union, unincorporated organization or association or any other person or group of persons be reported. To deter contributions from third party agents, registered political parties must enclose with their Form E-521, copies, certified by the party's chief official agent, of every statement or document a party received pursuant to subsections 240(6) and (7) of *The Election Act, 1996*. An auditor's report filed in accordance with 237 of *The Election Act, 1996* must also accompany a registered political party's Form E-521.

As represented in their respective annual fiscal period returns filed on Form E-521, depicted in the following tables is a summary of registered political party contributions received, and expenses incurred, for the fiscal year 2007.

Fiscal Year 2007

Registered Political Party	Total Contributions	Contributions	Operating Expenses	Expenses		Total
		Cash on Hand		Advertising	Other	
*Green Party of Saskatchewan	8,001.00	1,100.79	2,184.19	217.30	5,912.00	8,313.49
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	2,291,297.45	468,940.56	1,634,509.84	134,357.10	299,208.75	2,068,075.69
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	13,875.09	6,939.66	13,802.47	-	3,775.00	17,577.47
**Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	654,673.00	14,588.00	239,030.00	1,823.00	333,947.00	574,800.00
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	9,793.84	14.56	9,857.55	1,440.88	-	11,298.43
Saskatchewan Party	4,794,646.00	688,349.00	2,683,931.00	214,922.00	1,498,845.00	4,397,698.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	5,279.31	2,049.27	5,261.13	-	-	5,261.13

*At the printing of this report the Green Party's return for the fiscal year 2007 had not been finalized.

**See Page 34 re Party Change of Name for the Saskatchewan Heritage Party, and the deregistration of the Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party.

**Fiscal Year 2006
As Adjusted**

Registered Political Party	Total Contributions	Contributions	Operating Expenses	Expenses		Total
		Cash on Hand		Advertising	Other	
Green Party of Saskatchewan	\$ 6,206.00	\$ 2,139.04	\$ 2,242.33	-	\$ 5,050.40	\$ 7,292.73
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	1,715,234.64	1,142,026.03	1,644,891.56	-	220,446.81	1,865,338.37
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	8,473.49	8,636.78	12,407.66	343.47	978.22	13,729.35
Saskatchewan Heritage Party	765.00	206.45	537.45	-	21.10	558.55
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	327,377.00	43,465.00	181,161.00	879.00	49,457.00	231,497.00
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	3,848.83	1,084.87	2,965.27	-	200.00	3,165.27
Saskatchewan Party	1,406,375.00	177,454.00	982,445.00	76,271.00	339,436.00	1,398,152.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	7,748.00	6,416.62	3,092.58	-	-	3,092.58

Note: The information provided for 2007 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required changes will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

Pursuant to section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, registered political party Form E-521 returns are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan. 2007 returns may be viewed on the Elections Saskatchewan Web site.

C. Saskatchewan Political Contributions Tax Credit System

1. Introduction

The political contributions tax credit system provides provincial resident taxpayers, inclusive of individuals and corporations, the opportunity to claim tax credits based on eligible contributions made to a registered political party or independent candidate for which a valid tax receipt is obtained. *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* governs the Province's political contributions tax credit system and provides the basis for calculating political contribution tax credits for use by provincial resident taxpayers under *The Income Tax Act, 2000* (Saskatchewan) (the "Provincial Tax Act").

Tax receipts issued by registered political parties or independent candidates must conform to policies underlying the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* to qualify under the *Provincial Tax Act*. The Chief Electoral Officer has interpreted these policies to include the election of Members to the Legislative Assembly and necessarily related activities. Specifically, registered political parties and independent candidates may receipt contributions from provincial resident taxpayers, in accordance with the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, when those contributions are used to advance the democratic process in Saskatchewan.

2. Tax Receipts

Official income tax receipts are issued under section 8 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* by a chief official agent on behalf of a registered political party or by a business manager in the case of an independent candidate. Only chief official agents whose names are recorded in the *Register of Political Parties* maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer can issue tax receipts. The business manager of an independent candidate is eligible to issue tax receipts if the constituency returning officer in accordance with subsection 48(2) of *The Election Act, 1996* certifies the candidate's nomination.

- Tax receipts may be issued for eligible contributions of \$25.00 or more received by a registered political party or independent candidate.

Effective with the 2004 taxation year, the tax credit available to provincial resident taxpayers is calculated in accordance with the following formula:

- Where the total eligible contribution is \$400 or less, the amount of the tax credit that a taxpayer is entitled to claim for a taxation year is 75 percent of the total contribution, or
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than \$400 but not greater than \$750, the tax credit is \$300 plus 50 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds \$400; and
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than \$750, the tax credit a taxpayer is entitled to claim is lesser of:
 - \$475 plus 33 ⅓ percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds \$750; or
 - \$650.

3. Annual/Campaign Period Reporting

In accordance with section 13 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, a chief official agent of a participating registered political party must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used for the preceding calendar year. This reconciliation is filed with the Chief Electoral Officer in prescribed form on or by the last day of April. This annual reporting is undertaken on an *Annual Report of Contributions (Registered Political Party)* (Form P-602) and details the aggregate amount of contributions receipted, the number of tax receipts issued, spoiled or duplicated, and the number of tax receipts retained (i.e., unused).

Where an independent candidate participates in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, that candidate's business manager must file, in prescribed form, a reconciliation of tax receipts provided for use during the campaign period, together with the aggregate amount of contributions receipted, in accordance with section 12 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. Independent candidates campaign period reporting is submitted on a *Campaign Period Report of Contributions (Independent Candidate)* (Form P-606).

The aggregate value of political contribution tax credit receipts for 2002 was \$2,010,183.89, for 2003 was \$4,253,132.34, for 2004 was \$1,811,834.88, for 2005 was \$2,070,248.98, for 2006 was 2,383,382.00 and for 2007 was \$6,154,445.06, \$11,110 was receipted and reported for independent candidates for 2003. Registered political parties, which issued tax receipts, and the aggregate value of those receipts for 2001-2007, are set out in the following tables.

**Political Contributions Received
(Calendar Year 2001-2007)**

Registered Political Party	Aggregate Received Contributions						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*
Green Party of Saskatchewan	-	-	-	-	\$ 8,231.61	\$ 6,206.00	\$ 22,312.82
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	876,999.52	1,003,187.32	1,239,870.72	855,799.18	1,016,582.49	1,014,666.63	1,517,331.10
New Green Alliance	8,500.00	8,883.16	17,081.30	13,373.00	-	-	-
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	-	-	-	-	-	4,540.00	11,850.00
Saskatchewan Heritage Party/ Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	54,171.80	65,132.00	261,013.39	122,556.38	166,084.88	242,512.71	565,462.37
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	-	-	-	-	-	1,876.21	6,540.00
Saskatchewan Party	723,452.00	932,981.41	2,705,533.69	816,063.40	877,500.00	\$1,106,037.45	4,025,889.26
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	-	-	18,523.24	4,042.92	1,850.00	7,543.00	5,059.51
Independent	-	-	11,110.00	-	-	-	-
Total	\$1,663,123.32	\$2,010,183.89	\$ 4,253,132.34	\$1,811,834.88	\$ 2,070,248.98	\$2,383,382.00	\$ 6,154,445.06

* Note: The information provided for 2007 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required changes will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

**SASKATCHEWAN TAX CREDITS CLAIMED
FOR POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS (2001-2007)**

TAX YEAR	TOTAL
2001	\$1,663,123.32
2002	\$2,010,183.89
2003	\$4,253,132.34
2004	\$1,811,834.88
2005	\$2,070,248.98
2006	\$2,383,382.00
2007*	\$6,154,445.06
Total Tax Credits claimed	\$20,346,350.47

Pursuant to subsection 16(2) of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* and section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, annual registered political party and independent candidate campaign filings, on Form P-602 and P-606, respectively, are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

D. Annual Reporting, Statutory Compliance and Public Disclosure

1. Annual Reporting

On April 1, 1949, the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing (the "Select Standing Committee") reported to the Legislative Assembly that they unanimously agreed:

... election expenses be shown (in Public Accounts) not only in total for each electoral division but that there be made available to each Member a detailed listing of the expenditures for his particular electoral division; these listings to be ... available to opposition and government alike.

Because of the timing of the Martensville By-Election, constituency expenditures could not be finalized until the end of September 2007. Before the 2006-2007 *Detail of Expenditures* could be prepared, the Twenty-Sixth General Election was called. Because of the timing of the Twenty-Sixth General Election and the Cumberland By-Election constituency expenditures could not be finalized until the end of January, 2009. In accordance with the Select Standing Committee's recommendation, by the end of the fiscal year 2008-2009, the office will prepare for the Minister of Finance, to distribute the *Detail of Expenditures* (referring to non-election, election and By-Election expenditures, for fiscal years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008) to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and Members of the Legislative Assembly and the report should be tabled shortly thereafter.

In addition to the recommendation of the Select Standing Committee, statutory reporting is the means by which the Legislative Assembly has directed the Office to report on activities managed by the Chief Electoral Officer. Such reporting, in addition to outlining the conduct of each electoral event and financial practices related therefore to, provides an annual update of Office activities for consideration by the Legislative Assembly and members of the public. The Office, pursuant to sections 7 and 286 of *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Tabling of Documents Act, 1991*, prepared and tabled the following reports in the Legislative Assembly from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN - TABLED REPORTS (APRIL 1, 2007 - MARCH 31, 2008)

REPORT TABLED	DATE TABLED
<i>Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan (2006-2007)</i>	July 26, 2007

To comply with sections 174, 221, 233 and 262 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office also published the following notices in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, as set out in the following table.

**ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PUBLISHED NOTICES - THE SASKATCHEWAN GAZETTE
(APRIL 1, 2007 – MARCH 31, 2008)**

DATE GAZETTED	VOLUME/NUMBER	GAZETTED ITEM
April 13, 2007	Vol. 103 No. 15	Notice given of Nancy Heppner's election as the member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Martensville.
September 14, 2007	Vol. 103 No. 37	Notice given of an amendment to the name of the Saskatchewan Heritage Party to the Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party and the abbreviation of the name of name to Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party – SDAP.
October 26, 2007	Vol. 103 No. 43	Amendment of the abbreviation of the Saskatchewan Marijuana Party from SKMP to Saskatchewan Marijuana Party (SKMP)
December 7, 2007	Vol. 103 No. 49	Return of members elected (57) at the November 7, 2007 Provincial General Election.
December 21, 2007	Vol. 103 No. 51	Return of member elected (Meadow Lake) at the November 7, 2007 Provincial General Election.
February 8, 2008	Vol. 104 No. 6	Province of Saskatchewan Expense Limits for the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2008.
February 15, 2008	Vol. 104 No. 7	Summary of financial contributions received and expenses incurred by candidates for the March 5, 2007 By-Election in the constituency of Martensville.

In support of the heightened transparency objective of *The Election Act, 1996*, the foregoing reports, documents and notices are available for public review at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. Statutory Compliance Assistance.

The Election Act, 1996 places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to discharge administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, to compile requisite support documentation, and to disclose annual and electoral financial details in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. To this end, the Office previously published the following guidance documentation, pursuant to section 5 and Part VII (Registration and Election Financing) of *The Election Act, 1996*: i) *Registered Political Party's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-508); ii) *Chief Official Agent's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-520); iii) *Auditor's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-528); iv) *Candidate's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-400); v) *Business Manager's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-402); and vi) *Auditor's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-404).

Forms E-400, E-402 and E-404 were updated in the 2005-2006 fiscal year with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006. In the fall of 2006 Form E-508, E-520 and E-528 were updated with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006. The above guides as well as the Form E-412 Candidate Returns and the Form E-524 Registered Political Party Return and all the associated attachments are now available on CD.

Further, to outline the statutory obligations under the system governing registered political parties' and independent candidates' acceptance of eligible contributions and the issuance of official tax receipts, the Office also previously prepared and disseminated the *Guide to Provisions of The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Registered Political Party)* (Form E-600) and the *Guide to Provisions of the Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Independent Candidate)* (Form E-604).

3. Public Disclosure/Relations

In accordance with section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Chief Electoral Officer will supply any person who so requests copies of, or extracts from, registers or any report, return or document pertaining to a registered political party or candidate, which are statutorily filed with the Office. It should be noted that such reports, returns and documents may not be complete or may contain errors/omissions, as the Office's review and verification of such documentation may not have been completed at time of initial public inspection. Following Office review and verification, all finalized reports, returns and documents remain available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

The Office also maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires, and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

E. Operational Expenditures - Elections Saskatchewan

The Office annually presents budgetary expenditure estimates by function - administration, constituency returning office maintenance and annual electoral related activities - to the Board of Internal Economy. Actual annual administration and constituency level financial results for fiscal year 2007-2008 are set out in summary form in the following table.

OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES - ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008

EXPENDITURE CODE	ADMINISTRATION	CONSTITUENCIES (58)
Personal Services	392,741.00	38,912.00
Contractual Services	237,137.00	
Advertising	7,639.00	
Travel and Business	21,336.00	
Supplies and Services	9,196.00	
Assets Expensed	<u>24,009.00</u>	
Total	692,058.00	38,912.00

Refer to the Appendix for current year financial statement and notes.

VII. TWENTY-SIXTH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION

On October 10, 2007, the Twenty-Fifth Saskatchewan Legislature was dissolved, pursuant to section 6 of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2007*, by the Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. Also on the 10th of October, an Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council was passed, pursuant to section 31 of *The Election Act, 1996* (The Act), directing the Chief Electoral Officer to issue a Writ of Election to each of the Province's 58 constituency returning officers enabling the Saskatchewan electorate to go to the polls on November 7, 2007.

For Election Preparedness, Returning Officer Training and Communications see Section V – Strategic Initiatives – Medium Term, elsewhere in this document.

Registered Provincial Political Parties

The November 7th, 2007, election acknowledged 8 provincial political parties for purposes of fielding candidates. Pursuant to section 231 of the Act, the Office recognized the existence of the following political parties in the Register of Political Parties:

- Green Party of Saskatchewan
- New Democratic Party, Sask. Section
- Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party
- Saskatchewan Liberal Association
- Saskatchewan Marijuana Party
- Saskatchewan Party
- Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)

Registered Political Parties (as of October 10, 2007)

Political Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Party Leader
Green Party of Saskatchewan	Green Party	Sandra Finley
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)	Lorne Calvert
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	P. C. Party of Sask.	Rick Swenson
Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party	Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party - SDAP	Kurtis Devon Hein
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	Saskatchewan Liberal Party	David Karwacki
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	Saskatchewan Marijuana Party (SKMP)	Nathan Holowaty
Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	Western Independence Party (W.I.P.)	John Nesdoly

Candidate Nomination

Nomination of candidates concluded on October 22, 2007. At close of nomination 241 candidates had been nominated: 48 Green Party, 59 New Democratic Party (the nominated candidate for the party in the constituency of Swift Current withdrew before close of nominations and was replaced by a new candidate), 5 Progressive Conservative, 58 Saskatchewan Liberal Association, 58 Saskatchewan Party (subsequent to the close of nominations, the candidate in Regina Walsh Acres withdrew and could not be replaced), 5 Saskatchewan Marijuana Party, 8 Western Independence Party. The Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party chose not to file candidates at this election and on the day set for the close of nominations applied for the voluntary deregistration of the party.

Registered Political Parties-Nominated Candidates/Votes Obtained/Candidates Elected

Registered Political Party	Number of Candidates	Number of Valid Votes	Percentage of Valid Votes	Candidates Elected
Green Party of Saskatchewan	48	9,128	02.01	-
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	58 ₁	168,704	37.24	20
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	5	832	00.18	-
Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party	-	-	-	-
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	58	42,585	9.40	-
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	5	517	00.11	-
Saskatchewan Party	57 ₂	230,671	50.92	38
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	8	572	00.13	-
Totals	239	453,009	100.00 ₃	58

1. Prior to the close of nominations, a nominated candidate resigned and was replaced by another candidate.
2. After the close of nominations a candidate withdrew, it was too late to replace the candidate.
3. Does not equal 100 due to rounding.

Provincial Enumeration

From the 10th of October through to the 19th, an enumeration of eligible electors was conducted for each of the Province's 2,722 polling divisions. The Province's enumerators sat on November 3, 2007, pursuant to section 26 of the Act, to make necessary revisions to the voters' list. As a result of these efforts, 598,234 provincial residents were declared eligible to vote, as established on the revised voters' list. Those residents not recognized on the revised voters' list were able to register to vote by making a declaration at an advance poll or on polling day.

Voting

On the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th days of November, 156 advance polls were conducted in the Province's 58 constituencies. To facilitate electoral participation, special polling stations were established in 69 hospitals and 5 remand centres. Regular polling stations were open from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm C.S.T. on the 7th of November enabling the Province's 598,234 eligible voters the opportunity to exercise their democratic franchise. Eligible voters unable to attend either a regular, special or advance poll were entitled to vote by absentee ballot.

Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election – Voting Results by Method

Method of Voting	Number of Votes
Number of Names on Voters' List	598,234
Number of Votes Counted for Candidates	453,009
Number of Votes Counted at Advance Polls	49,572
Number of Votes Counted at Special Polls (Hospitals/Remand Centres)	1,043
Number of Absentee Ballots Counted	3,001
Number of Rejected Ballots	1,767
Number of Unopened Ballot Envelopes	32
Total Number of Electors Who Voted	454,776
Percentage of Electors Who Voted	76.02

Electoral Results

Unofficial electoral results were published on the evening of the November 7, 2007 resulting in 38 Saskatchewan Party and 20 New Democrat members' elect. None of the candidates were elected by acclamation. Deposits were forfeited by 143 of the Province's 241 candidates, pursuant to section 47 of the Act, for not obtaining at least one half of the total number of votes cast for the candidate elected. Deposits were forfeited by 2 candidates who withdrew, pursuant to section 52 of the Act. The 145 candidates forfeiting their deposits included: 48 Green Party, 20 New Democratic Party, 5 Progressive Conservative, 56 Saskatchewan Liberal Association, 5 Saskatchewan Marijuana Party, 3 Saskatchewan Party and 8 Western Independence Party.

On November 19, 2007, constituency returning officers tabulated the results of votes cast in the hospital and remand centre polls and by absentee ballot. These figures were then reflected in the relevant constituency results concluding the final count. Upon completion of the final count, on November 30, 2007, 57 out of 58 of the Province's constituency returning officers made a Return to the Writ of Election.

On December 7, 2007, the Office published in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* (Vol. 103, No. 49) a notice of receipt of the Return to the Writ and the names of 57 candidates elected. As a result of the judicial recount, pursuant to section 155 of the Act, notice of receipt of the Return and the name of the candidate elected for the constituency of Meadow Lake was not published on the December 7th date.

Judicial Recount

Pursuant to section 155 of the Act, a judicial recount was conducted in the constituency of Meadow Lake. Under the Act, a constituency returning officer, upon request by any candidate or business manager, is legislated to apply to the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench (the "Court") to ask the Court to undertake a judicial recount, if, after final count, the margin of victory of the candidate declared to be elected is less than the total number of all unopened envelopes, rejected ballots and ballots objected to.

In the constituency of Meadow Lake, upon final count, the Saskatchewan Party candidate was declared elected with a plurality of 37 votes. On judicial recount, pursuant to section 155, the margin of the elected candidate was reduced by one to 36 votes.

On December 21, 2007, the Office, pursuant to section 174 of the Act, published in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* (Vol. 103, No. 51) a notice of receipt of the Return to the Writ and the named candidate elected for the constituency of Meadow Lake.

Poll by Poll Election Results are detailed in the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: Volume I – Statement of Votes – Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election*. Volume I is available in the Elections Saskatchewan Web site at www.elections.sk.ca. This publication is also available in CD format by contacting Elections Saskatchewan.

VIII. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION

The Chief Electoral Officer is charged with administering the Province's electoral statute, and with assessing and, where applicable, reimbursing eligible election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review and audit to certify public reimbursement of election expenses by reviewing financial practices, documents and disclosure of registered political parties and candidates. The expenses and income of Registered Political Parties and candidates are reported, the returns are audited and Elections Saskatchewan Expenses are noted.

The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: Volume II - Campaign Contributions and Expenditures - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election to be tabled in early 2009 will detail the election financial activities of registered political parties and candidates including amounts reimbursed to chief official agents and business managers for eligible election expenses incurred by each registered political party and candidates pursuant to sections 264 and 265 of *The Election Act, 1996*. Volume II will also include the expenditures of Elections Saskatchewan for the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election. As well an individual constituency expenditure summary will be included in the Report.

IX. LIAISON

To improve the electoral process in Saskatchewan, the Office reviews and assesses new electoral administrative initiatives on an on-going basis. In order to be kept up to date on innovations in other jurisdictions and in order to gauge public expectations liaison with others is desirable.

In 2007/2008 fiscal year, Office representatives participated in federal, provincial and territorial electoral meetings, and conferences as summarized below:

A. Council On Government Ethics Laws (COGEL)

The Chief Electoral Officer and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended the September 2007 COGEL Conference in Victoria, British Columbia. Sessions attended included emerging trends in election administration (technology) and IT systems development, public financing, the Canadian Accountability Act, public education programs, campaign finance, current trends in legislation, managing the blogosphere, voter turnout, leadership development (coaching) and performance measurement. The Chief Electoral Officer served on the Awards Committee for 2007.

B. Conference of Canadian Election Officials - 2007

Federal, provincial and territorial Chief Electoral Officers and senior staff have met annually since 1975 at the Conference of Canadian Election Officials to discuss all facets of electoral administration. From July 30-August 3, 2007 Elections Nunavut hosted the 2007 Conference of Canadian Election Officials in Iqaluit. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended the Conference on behalf of Elections Saskatchewan. Deliberations focused on advance voting, trends in legislation, voter education programs and the Electoral Technology Accord.

C. Canadian Election Officials' Winter Workshop 2008

In the mid 1980's senior Canadian election officials set up a workshop format where various electoral topics are discussed at the operational level. The workshop has been held most years in the middle of February. From February 20-22, 2008 Elections Manitoba hosted the Winter Workshop in Winnipeg. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended the Workshop on behalf of Elections Saskatchewan. Topics of discussion and learning included "taking the vote to the people", voting by the disabled, fixed election dates, returning officer recruitment, training, development, and evaluation, voting official recruiting and training and payroll, communications with returning officers and the media, and third party advertising.

D. Consultations with Elections Canada - National Register of Electors Advisory Committee

Elections Canada's National Register of Electors Advisory Committee was formed in 1999 to discuss the further development of maintenance of the national permanent voters' registry. The Committee was to provide an ongoing forum for: (i) sharing information to improve the maintenance and use of electronic electoral databases; and (ii) discussing Elections Canada's initiatives for sharing the national registry with provincial and territorial jurisdictions. On behalf of Elections Saskatchewan, the Chief Electoral Officer participated in a Committee meeting on November 22 and 23, 2007 in Ottawa.

E. Consultation with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

In November, 2007 the Chief Electoral Officer and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer were asked to attend a meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for a presentation and questions pertaining to Bill C-16.

F. Electoral Technology Accord

In 2003, exploratory meetings were held with participation from most jurisdictions to discuss the possibility of working together to realize some benefits in the form of cost savings and efficiencies in the area of information and communications technology. This resulted in the signing of the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) by all jurisdictions with the mandate to produce a white paper on the subject.

The white paper, *Electoral Technology Accord (Canada), Working Committee Report on the Electoral Technology Accord* which was published in 2004 outlined several strategic actions to promote and build a higher degree of collaboration and co-operation among electoral jurisdictions to realize the benefits laid out in the accord.

From fall 2004 to spring 2007 the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) Working Group: defined a common data model for the basic Elector, Address and Event; as well as data required by the business areas of Elections Finance (such as political party election filing and candidate election filing) and Elections Geography. It has become a significant shared asset. Work has also been done on a common training infrastructure by reviewing the latest concepts in adult learning and effective use of technology (see 2006-2007 Annual Report for more details).

The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented the Office as a member of the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) Working Group during the entire period with periodic assistance from the Manager of Election Finances and the Manager of Elections Operations and Communications.

At the August 2007 Conference of Canadian Election Officials Conference it was determined that the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) had met its original mandate and that a new mandate was needed. At the November 2007 meeting of the National Register of Electors Advisory Committee Meeting there was a further discussion on the future of the ETA. There was consensus to maintain the ETA model and that a Technology Committee be established under the Conference of Canadian Election Officials. The Chief Electoral Officer of British Columbia will prepare a document outlining the mandate, the scope of activities and budget for the first year of the Technology Committee. The document will be tabled at the 2008 Conference of Canadian Election Official in August 2008.

G. Educational Liaison

The Chief Electoral Officer gave presentations to the Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute in April 2007.

H. Ongoing Liaison

Throughout the reporting period, the Office has received valuable assistance from all Canadian federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions while researching best practices in other jurisdictions. The spring of 2004 brought the launch of the Canadian Election Resource Library (CERL). This on-line extranet resource is based at the offices of Elections Manitoba. A nominal annual subscription fee from the various electoral offices across the country subsidizes the coordinator's salary and benefits. CERL members may interact with other CERL members by replying to messages or by starting their own message thread. CERL members may also view on-line forms, legislation, manuals/guides, policies and reports from other jurisdictions across the country.

X. MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

A. HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

- Following the November 5, 2003 Provincial General Election a complaint came as a result of concerns raised by an individual from Saskatoon. The individual felt aggrieved and humiliated by the treatment the Province's elections legislation affords a blind voter. Over the past several years numerous meetings, including conciliation took place, to work out a solution, to this situation, however, no compromise was reached. As a result this matter was referred to a Tribunal.
- The hearing was held on November 21/22 2006 in Saskatoon. The complainant requested that Braille candidate information be available at all of the approximate 3000 polls across the Province and that he receive some compensation for his humiliation at having to use a template at the poll. During the conciliation stage the logistical problems of producing Braille documents and distributing them across the Province were identified (not to mention the high cost of doing so). The Chief Electoral Officer had offered instead to institute a process similar to that set up for Absentee Voters whereby an individual could apply for Braille information to be made available at his or her poll. This offer was rejected. The Office received the decision of the Tribunal shortly after the November 2007 general election. The Tribunal determined that the Office had made sufficient accommodations for blind or visually impaired voters.
- During his testimony at the tribunal hearing, the Chief Electoral Officer mentioned his desire to redesign the Blind Voter Template that had been in use since 1981 and his wish to consult with representatives of disability organizations across the Province. A new Template was designed with a closed top and bottom and Braille and large print numbers on the side. The new template was well received. On April 9, 2008 (Regina), and April 10, 2008 (Saskatoon), the Chief Electoral Officer and Assistant Chief Electoral Officer met with representatives from disability organizations and individual voters with disabilities. Many interesting suggestions for administrative and legislative changes were heard. These discussions will be taken into account as the Office prepares a report for recommendations for changes to *The Election Act, 1996*.
- Recently a complaint was received regarding the November 7, 2007 general election. The complaint came as a result of concerns raised by an individual from Saskatoon. The individual, a wheelchair user, alleges that he was discriminated against with respect to facilities to which the public is customarily admitted because of his disability. The legal process regarding this complaint has begun.

B. STAFFING

- The position of Manager of Information Technology and Register of Electors, which became vacant in November 2006, remained vacant due to the timing of the general election. For the past eighteen months the Office has had an agreement with the Communications and Technology Services branch of the Legislative Assembly Office for basic IT services. At the time of writing this position is in the process of being filled.
- The Manager of Election Operations and Communications returned to her previous position at the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. In the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget process the position of Manager of Election Operations and Communications was split into two more junior positions. The new positions are Elections Operations Officer and Communications/Community Relations Officer. The Communications/Community Relations function is being temporarily carried out by the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer. A permanent replacement is to be recruited in early 2009. The Election Operations Officer position is currently being filled on a part-time contract basis with the recruitment of a permanent replacement likely to take place in early 2009.
- Beverlee Graf was hired as an Acting Administrative Coordinator.
- From time to time the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer Electoral Officer staff was complemented with temporary contractor resources.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS – AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTION ACT, 1996

Major changes were made to *The Election Act, 1996*, which were proclaimed on March 22, 2006. *The Annual Report Compendium 2003-2005* and the *Annual Reports of 2005-2006* and *2006-2007*, with the advent of the regularization of the Annual Reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on a fiscal year basis, brought the opportunity for the Chief Electoral Officer to make Recommendations on Amendments to *The Election Act* on a regular basis.

With the 2007-2008 fiscal year including a general election, the new recommendations for Amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, and the repeat of old recommendations not yet addressed, will be included in the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election. Volume III will be tabled in February 2009.

2007-2008 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND NOTES

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
Financial Assets		
Due from the General Revenue Fund	\$1,321,926	\$ 170,159
Accounts Receivable	330,537	
	<u>1,652,463</u>	<u>170,159</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts payable (General Election Payable)	1,617,387	158,682
Accrued vacation pay	35,076	11,477
	<u>1,652,463</u>	<u>170,159</u>
Net Debt	0	0
Non-financial Assets:		
Tangible Capital Assets (Note 3)	25,446	16,992
Prepaid expenses	-	-
	<u>25,446</u>	<u>16,992</u>
Accumulated Surplus	<u>\$ 25,446</u>	<u>\$ 16,992</u>

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)**

	<u>2007</u>		<u>2006</u>
Revenue:	Budget (Note 4)	Actual (Note 5)	Actual
General Revenue Fund:	\$ 1,174,154	\$ 730,970	\$ 773,294
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	-
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 1,174,154</u>	<u>\$ 730,970</u>	<u>\$ 773,294</u>
Expenses:			
Personal Services	625,191	431,653	483,192
Contractual Services	220,364	237,137	238,855
Advertising	70,592	7,639	10,419
Travel and Business	79,394	21,336	17,511
Supplies and Services	160,954	9,196	4,107
Ammortization	-	15,555	9,404
Total Expense	<u>\$ 1,156,495</u>	<u>\$ 722,516</u>	<u>\$ 763,488</u>
Surplus/Deficit	<u>\$ 17,659</u>	<u>\$ 8,454</u>	<u>\$ 9,804</u>
Accumulated Surplus beginning of year		16,992	7,188
Accumulated Surplus End of Year		<u>\$ 25,446</u>	<u>\$ 16,992</u>

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2007	2006
Annual Surplus	\$ 8,454	\$9,804
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(24,009)	(19,208)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	<u>\$ 15,555</u>	<u>\$9,404</u>
	(8,454)	(9,804)
Use of a prepaid expense	-	-
	-	-
(Increase) in Net Debt	-	-
Net debt, beginning of year		
Net debt, end of year	-	-

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)**

	2007 (Note 5)	2006
Operating:		
Cash received from:		
General Revenue Fund:	730,970	773,294
Miscellaneous Income	-	-
	<u>\$ 730,970</u>	<u>\$ 773,294</u>
Cash paid for:		
Personal Services	431,653	483,192
Contractual Services	237,137	238,855
Advertising	7,639	10,419
Travel and Business	21,336	17,511
Supplies and Services	9,196	4,107
Equipment	-	-
	<u>\$ 706,961</u>	<u>\$ 754,084</u>
Cash Provided by Operating Transactions	<u>\$ 24,009</u>	<u>\$ 19,208</u>
Capital Transactions:		
Cash to acquire tangible capital assets	24,009	19,208
Cash Applied to Tangible Capital Transactions	<u>\$ 24,009</u>	<u>\$ 19,208</u>
Increase (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2008**

1. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the Legislative Assembly and is appointed by resolution. The mandate of the Office is to administer provincial elections, enumerations other than during an election, and provincial election finances under *The Election Act, 1996*. The Office maintains the province's political contributions tax credit disclosure regime under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001* and administers referenda, plebiscites and time votes according to *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and *The Time Act*.

2. SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer used Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles in the preparation of these financial statements. Significant accounting policies are described below:

- (a) **Basis of Accounting** – The financial statements are prepared using the expense basis of accounting.
- (b) **Revenue** – The Office receives statutory appropriations from the General Revenue Fund to carry out required duties.
- (c) **Tangible Capital Assets** – Tangible capital assets are reported at cost less accumulated amortization. All capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over three to five years.
- (d) **Accrued Vacation Pay Liability** – Vacation entitlements earned but not taken are recorded as a liability.

3. TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

Category	Original Cost	Cumulative Comparison			Original Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value
		2007 Accumulated Amortization	2007 Net Book Value	2006 Accumulated Amortization	2006 Net Book Value		
Computer Equipment	79,684	61,802	17,882	61,635	49,650	11,985	
Office Equipment	10,857	6,281	4,576	7,472	4,614	2,858	
Furniture	13,053	10,065	2,988	10,478	8,329	2,149	
Total	\$ 103,594	\$ 78,148	\$ 25,446	\$ 79,585	\$ 62,593	\$ 16,992	

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4. **BUDGET FIGURES** – These are amounts presented annually to the Board of Internal Economy for the Office to carry out duties under *The Election Act, 1996*.
 5. **TOTAL EXPENSE FIGURES** – The figures presented only include normal non-election expenses. The estimated cost of the 2007 General Election would bring total expenditures to \$10,852,337 for the year.
 6. **COSTS BORNE BY THIRD PARTY AGENCIES** – During the year the Office received certain administrative services from the Department of Finance and the Legislative Assembly without charge. No provision for these costs has been made in these statements.

